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CHARLES LEVER

His Life in His Letters

Chancellor] [*Dublin*

CHARLES LEVER

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His Life in His Letters

BY

EDMUND DOWNEY

WITH PORTRAITS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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CHARLES LEVER:
HIS LIFE IN HIS LETTERS.

XIV.

FLORENCE AND SPEZZIA.

1864.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *Jan.* 2, 1863 [?1864].

"I AM not sure—so much has your criticism on 'Tony' weighed with me, and so far have I welded his fortunes by your counsel—that you'll not have to own it one of these days as your own, and write 'T. B. by J. B.' in the title. In sober English, I am greatly obliged for all the interest you take in the story,—an interest which I insist on believing includes me fully as much as the Magazine. For this reason it is that I now send you another instalment, so that if change or suppression be needed, there will be ample time for either.

"Whenever Lytton says anything of the story let me have it. Though his counsels are often

above me, they are always valuable. You will have received O'D. before this, and if you like it, I suppose the proof will be on the way to me. As to the present envoy of 'Tony,' if you think that an additional chapter would be of advantage to the part for March, take chapters xxv. and xxvi. too if you wish, for I now feel getting up to my work again, though the ague still keeps its hold on me and makes my alternate days very shaky ones.

"I am sorry to say that, grim as I look in marble, I am more stern and more worn in the flesh. I thought a few days ago that it was nearly up, and I wrote my epitaph—

> "For fifty odd years I lived in the thick of it,
> And now I lie here heartily sick of it.

"Poor Thackeray! I cannot say how I was shocked at his death. He wrote his 'Irish Sketch-Book,' which he dedicated to me, in my old house at Templeogue, and it is with a heavy heart I think of all our long evenings together,—mingling our plans for the future with many a jest and many a story.

"He was fortunate, however, to go down in the full blaze of his genius—as so few do. The fate of most is to go on pouring water on the lees, that people at last come to suspect they never got honest liquor from the tap at all.

"I got a strange proposal t'other day from America, from The New York Institute, to go out and give lectures or readings there. As regards

money it was flattering enough, but putting aside all questions as to my ability to do what I have never tried, there is in America an Irish element that would certainly assail me, and so I said 'No.' The *possibility* of doing the thing somewhere has now occurred to me. Would they listen to me in Edinburgh, think you? I own to you frankly I don't like the thought,—it is not in any way congenial to me. *Ma che volete?* I'd do it, as I wear a shabby coat and drink a small claret, though I'd like broadcloth and Bordeaux as well as my neighbours. Give me your opinion on this. I have not spoken of it to any others.

"My very best wishes for you and all yours in the year to come."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *Jan.* 11, 1864.

"I thank you sincerely for your kind note, and all the hopeful things you say of T. B. I am not in the least ashamed to say how easily elated I feel by encouragement of this sort, any more than I am to own how greatly benefited I have been by your uncle's criticisms.

"I also send O'D. The next thing I mean to do after I return from Spezzia, where I go to-day, will be a short O'D. for March, and by that time I think it not improbable we shall be in the midst of great events here to record.

"Tell your uncle to cut out my Scotch *ad lib.* All my recollections of the dialect date from nigh thirty years ago in the N. of Ireland.

"Believe me with what pleasure I make your acquaintance, and with every good wish of the good season," &c.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *Jan.* 22.

"I was right glad to get your letter, and gladder to find the 'Tony' No. 7 pleased you. You know so much of that strange beast the public, which for so many a year I have only known by report, that when you tell me the thing will do I gain fresh courage; and what between real calamities and the small rubs of life administered to me of late years in a severer shape than I ever felt before, I do need courage.

"Most men who had written so long and so much as I have done would have become thick-hided, but if I am so, it is only to attack—aggressive attack. To anything like reproof, remonstrance, or appeal, I am more open than I ever was in my earlier days, not merely because with greater knowledge of my own shortcomings I feel how much I need it, but that the amount of interest it implies, the sympathy for which it vouches, warms my heart, and gives me renewed vigour and the wish and the hope to do better.

"Now I only inflict all this egotism upon you the better to thank you for your kind counsels; in fact, I am disclosing the depth of my wound to show my gratitude to my doctor who is curing it.

"Proof has not yet reached me, and I therefore cannot justify, by any plausibility in the context,

how the night was so fine for Alice and the morning so severe for Tony.[1]

"You are right. I feel it more strongly since you said it that Tony has a long way to go. Hope he is worthy of Alice; but is he in this respect any worse than his neighbours? I don't believe any man was worth the woman that inspired a real passion, and he only became approximately so by dint of loving her. And so if T. B. does ever turn out a good fellow it is Alice has done it, and not yours very faithfully.

"My thanks for your cheque, which came all safe. I thought O'D. had better be anecdotic and gossipy at *first*, but when I send you the batch (which I will in a day or two), tell me if something more didactic ought to come into preachment."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *Jan.* 22, 1864.

"I send you herewith a piece of O'Dowderie, and if it be too light—I don't suspect that's its fault—I'll weight it; and if it be too doughy, I'll put more barm in it; and, last of all, if you don't like it, I'll burn it.

"What in the name of all good manners does Lord Russell mean by writing impertinences to all Europe? He is like an old Irish beggar well known in Dublin who sat in a bowl and kicked

[1] Mr Blackwood had written: "Observe that in the garden scene you make it a fine night, and from the morning showing before they separated, apparently the night was short; whereas when Tony started in the cold and snow for Burnside it was clearly winter."

all round him. As to fighting for the Danes, it is sheer nonsense. They haven't a fragment of a case, and we should not enjoy Mr Pickwick's poor . . . consolation of shouting with the largest mob.

"The Italians are less warlike than a month ago. The 'Men of Action'—as the party call themselves who write in the newspapers but never take the field—declare that they are only waiting for the signal of 'Kossuth' from Hungary; but the fate of the Poles—who *do* fight and are brave soldiers—is a terrible *a fortiori* lesson to these people here, and I suspect they are imbibing it.

"I got a long letter yesterday from Lord Malmesbury and the criticism of Kinglake's history. Why they don't like it I cannot imagine. I believe he has hit the exact measure of the Emperor's capacity, courage, and character altogether, and I go with him in everything."

To Dr Burbidge.

"Florence, *Feb.* 11, 1864.

"It seems to be leaking out that both Pam and Russell have been what the sporting men call 'squared' by the Queen, who would not hear of a war with Germany. The Court plays very often a more prominent part in foreign politics than the nation wots of, and certainly the Prince during the Crimean war maintained close correspondence with persons in the confidence of the R. Emperor,—not treasonably, of course, but in such a way as to require great watchfulness on the part of our Ministers. This I know. There

is, in fact, the game of kings as well as of nations, and the issue not always identical.

"Our glorious weather has come back, though we hear it has been severe along the coast, and snow has actually fallen in some places.

"To-day I am to have a consultation about my wife with an Edinburgh professor of note who is passing through to Rome. The opportunity was not to be lost, though the bare proposal has made her very nervous.

"My proofs—my proofs—are lost! gone Heaven knows where!—and here I sit lamenting, and certainly doing nothing else. I cannot take up the end of an unknown thread, and if I did go on, it would be to make Luttrell in love with Dolly Stuart.

"Only fancy my sitting for nigh an hour last night where a man [? retailed] the story of 'T. Butler,' which he had been reading in 'Blackwood'!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, *Feb.* 13, 1864.

"No proof. I must have made a fiasco of it in writing to C. & H. to release the proof detained in London, and which they will now discover to be 'Tony'! Into what scrapes flunkeys, messengers, *et hoc genus*, do betray us. I have offended more people in life by the awkwardness of my servants than I have done by all my proper shortcomings, which have not been few. I send you two chapters for the May number, which I intend, however, to be longer by another chapter if you desire it.

"I have been casting my eyes over the 'Athelings' in the 3-vol. form. Is that the length you wish for 'Tony Butler'? I never like being long-winded, but I am, after all my experiences, a precious bad judge of the time one ought to begin to 'pucker up the end of the stocking.' Advise me, therefore, on this, as on all else, about 'Tony.'

"The cold weather has all but done for me, and set my 'shaking' fearfully at work. The post is now two days *en retard* here, and I have great misgivings about all Italian management of everything save roguery."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Florence, *Feb.* 19.

"The proofs arrived to-day under the envelope that I forward. On learning from the post office in London that a proof of mine was detained there, I immediately surmised it must be one of my serial story 'Luttrell,' and enclosed the reference to C. & H. to release it. Now I find that it is 'Tony' and O'D. Consequently I am in terror lest our secret be out and all our hitherto care defeated by this *maladetto* messenger who 'crimped the tuppence.' I want you therefore to assure me, if you can assure me, that C. & Hall's people, when sent to St Martin's le Grand to release the proof, had no power to open and examine it, nor any privilege to carry it away with them out of the office. If this be the case, of course there is no mischief done, and I am *quitte pour la peur;* but pray do tell me the regulation on

the subject, and for Heaven's sake and Tony's sake, water that man's grog who posted the packet originally, or tell me his name, and I'll call my next villain by it, if I have to write another story."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *Feb.* 25, 1864.

"It is quite true, as you surmised; claims and demands of all sorts have been presented to me, and in my deeper and heavier cares there have mixed vexations and worries all the more bitter that to remedy them was no longer to build up a hope.

"My only anxiety about the missing proof was that it might lead to the discovery of our secret as to the authorship of 'Tony.' You have by your present letter allayed this fear, and I am easy.

"I await the proof, and what you say of it, to see if the last portion of 'Tony' will do. I own I thought better of it in *writing* than it perhaps deserves on *reading*.

"You must tell me, however, what number of sheets you think 3 vols. ought to be, for I want to make the craft as ship-shape as I am able.

"Be assured of one thing: I never for many a year felt more anxious for success, and the anxiety is only half selfish, if so much."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *Feb.* 25, 1864.

"In the O'D. I now send, the order should be: (1) Law, (2) Organ, (3) Chevalier d'Industrie. The

last is a sketch of a notorious (Continentally) Robert Napoleon Flynn, made Chief-Justice of Tobago by Lord Normanby in '36 or '37, the appointment being rescinded before he could go out. It was Grant who met him at Padua last week.

"I am terribly shaky and shaken. I hope I'll be able to finish 'Tony' before I go, but sometimes I think it will have to figure as a fragment. My headaches seldom leave me, and for the first time in my life I have become a bad sleeper.

"Let me have a proof of T. B. as soon as you can conveniently, for I want to get off to Spezzia and see what change of air and no pen-and-ink will do for me."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *Feb.*

"I have just got back from Spezzia, and found your pleasant note but no proof. It will probably arrive to-morrow. Of course it was right to tell Aytoun. I am the gladder of it, as perhaps I may get the benefit of his advice occasionally. Tell him what a hearty admirer he has in me, and with what pleasure I'd make his acquaintance. His glorious Lays are immense favourites of mine, and it is time I should thank you for the magnificent copy of them they sent me.

"Grant — Speke's Grant — drank tea with me a few nights back. I like him much; he is about the most modest traveller I ever met with. If an Irishman had done the half of his exploits he would not be endurable for ten years afterwards.

"I see Le Fanu has completed in the D. U. M. his clever story 'Wylder's Hand,' making his 3-vol. novel out of fifteen magazine sheets. As I suppose your pages are about the same as the Dub., tell me what you think our length ought to be.

"Why don't you throw your eyes over—not read, I don't ask that—'Luttrell,' and tell me what you think of it? I am so fearfully nervous of having got to the lees of the cask, that I have a nervous impatience to know what people think of the liquor."

To Dr Burbidge.

"FLORENCE, *March* 2, 1864.

"I got yesterday an F. O. declaring that Lord R. did not opine that we came within the provisions of chap. &c., and Act so-and-so Elizabeth, and therefore declined to accord us the assistance we had asked for. Thereupon I wrote an urgent and pressing letter to Napier, stating that I found myself so pledged by his assurances to my Church colleagues, that I begged he would immediately report to me what progress our application had made, in order that I might communicate it to our C. committee. I hope for a speedy reply.

"I have half a hope that the Whigs are falling. Pam's State declarations about Denmark *ought* to overthrow any Administration. Even Gladstone, so able in subterfuge, was not equal to the task assigned him of showing Black to be very frequently, but not naturally, White."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *March* 3, 1864.

"I only write one line to acknowledge and thank you for your cheque, which has just reached me. I have not looked at pen-and-ink for the past week, but I am on the road to get stronger. I always feel, in taking port wine (a hard thing to get here) for my ague, as if I were using crown pieces to repair the coppering of a shattered old craft. Better keep the money and let the worthless boat go to —— I won't say the devil, lest there come a confusion in my figure of speech.

"Of course 'Tony' is the main thing. In O'D. I am only like the retired Cat Princess, who merely caught mice for her amusement. I'll read the L. N. article with attention. Is Laurence Oliphant, *par hazard*, the author? He is a charming fellow, and I like him greatly, but I'd not think him a safe guide politically.

"I like Grant much, and have been at him to write some camp-life sketches on Africa. The Yankees here want him to go over to America and lecture, but he is far too modest to stand scrutiny from opera-glasses."

To Dr Burbidge.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *March* 4, 1864.

"I had hoped to have got a line from you either last night or the night before about your flunkey; so I am unable to wait longer, and must take one of the creatures that offers here. Indeed, making the one who remains do all the work has installed

him into a position of such insolent tyranny, it will take a month at least to reduce him to his proper proportions.

"Some disaster has befallen my No. of 'Luttrell' for April, No. 5, and I can hear nothing of it. The proof and added part were sent from this, by me, four weeks ago, and after that . . .

"I have not written for the last eight or ten days, but I am getting all right, and take long walks every day, looking at villas, of which there are scores, but scarcely a habitable one, at least as a permanent abode, to be found.

"There is not one word of news beyond the arming of the French fleet. I find that many Mazzinists here believe that Mazzini was really engaged in the late plot; but I can neither believe the plot nor that he was in it. I look upon it as a very clumsy police trick throughout.

"My wife makes no advance towards health,—a day back and a day forward is the history of her life; but everything shows me that to undertake a journey to Spezzia without feeling that I had a comfortable place for her when there, and that she could remain without another change back in winter, would be a fatal mistake."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, *March* 8, 1864.

"The whole story of R. N. F. (Robert Napoleon Flynn, his real name) is an unexaggerated fact, and I have only culled a very few of the traits known to me, and not given, as perhaps I ought, a rather

droll scene I had with him myself at Spezzia. The man was originally a barrister, and actually appointed Chief-Justice of Tobago by Lord Normanby, and as such presented to the Queen at the Levée. The appointment was rescinded, however, and the fellow sent adrift.

"I have met a large number of these fellows of every nation, but never one with the same versatility as this, nor with the same hearty enjoyment of his own rascality. Dickens never read over a successful proof with one-half the zest Flynn has felt when sending off—as I have known him to do—a quizzing letter to a Police Prefect from whose clutches he had just escaped by crossing a frontier. He is, in fact, the grand *artiste*, and he feels it.

"I am glad you like 'O'Dowd': first of all, they are the sort of things I can do best. I have seen a great deal of life, and have a tolerably good memory for strange and out-of-the-way people, and I am sure such sketches are far more my 'speciality' than story-writing.

"I assure you your cheery notes do me more service than my sulph.-quinine, and I have so much of my old schoolboy blood in me that I do my tasks better with praise than after a caning.

"Your sketch of the French Legitimist amused me much. The insolence of these rascals is the fine thing about them, as t'other day I heard one of our own amongst them (the uncle of a peer, and a great name too) reply, when I found him playing billiards at the club and asked him how he was

getting on: 'Badly, Lever, badly, or you wouldn't find me playing half-crown pool with three snobs that I'd not have condescended to know ten years ago.' And this *the three snobs* had to listen to!

"I am far from sure Grant was not 'done' by Flynn. But t'other night Labouchere (Lord Taunton's nephew and heir, who is the L. of the story) met Grant here, and we all pressed G. to confess he had been 'walked into,' but he only grew red and confused, and as we had laughed so much at F.'s victims, he would not own to having been of the number.

"The Napoleon paper is very good, and perhaps not exaggerated. It is the best sketch of the campaign I ever read, and only wants a further allusion to the intentions of the 4th corps under Prince Napoleon to be a perfect history of the event.

"'Schleswig-Holstein' admirable. I am proud of my company and *au raison.*"

To Dr Burbidge.

"Casa Capponi, *Wednesday, March* 1864.

"I thank you sincerely for the trouble you have had about my proof: honestly, I only wanted a criticism, but I forgot you had not seen the last previous part. As to what is to *come*, you know, I am sorry to say it, just as much as I do.

"'Luttrell' No. 5, that is for next month, has been in part lost, and I am in a fearful hobble about it,—that is, I must re-write, without any recollection of where, what, or how.

"My poor wife has been seriously, very seriously, attacked. Last night Julia was obliged to stay up with her, and to-day, though easier, she is not materially better. I write in great haste, as I have only got up, and it is nigh one o'clock, and the post closes early."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *March* 18, 1864.

"B. L.'s criticism on T. B. amused me greatly. Did you never hear of the elder who waited on Chief-Justice Holt to say, 'The Lord hath sent me to thee to say that thou must stop that prosecution that is now going on against me,' and Holt replied, 'Thou art wrong, my friend; the Lord never sent thee on such an errand, for He well knoweth it is not I, but the Attorney-General, that can enter a *nolle prosequi.*' But B[ulwer] L[ytton]'s fine pedantry beats the Chief-Justice hollow, with this advantage that he is wrong besides. Nothing is more common than for Ministers to 'swap' patronage. It was done in my own case, and to my sorrow, for I refused a good thing from one and took a d——d bad one from another. *Au reste*, he is all right both as to O'D. and Maitland. O'D. ought to be broader and wider. I have an idea that with a few illustrations it would make a very readable sort of gossiping book. I am not quite clear how far reminiscences and bygones come in well in such a *mélange*. After all, it is only a hash at best, and one must reckon

on it that the meat has been cooked already. What do *you* say? I have some Irish recollections of noticeable men like Bushe, Lord Guillamore, Plunkett, &c., too good to be lost, but perhaps only available as apropos to something passing.

"I have thought of some of these as subjects: Good Talkers—*Le Sport* Abroad—Diplomacy—Demi-monde Influences—Whist—Irish Justice—Rome as the Bon Marché of Europe—Travelled Americans—Plan of a new Cookery Book (with a quizz on Charters, your book), showing what to eat every month of the year. These I scratch down at random, for I can't write just yet: I have got gout *vice* ague retired, and my knuckle is as big as a walnut.

"I hope you have received T. B. before this. I am very sorry the conspirator chapter of T. B. does not appear this month, when the question of Stanfield is before the public, but I think O'Dowd might well touch on the question of the politicians of the knife. Give me your counsel about all these. B. L.'s remark that Maitland belonged to twenty or thirty years ago is perfectly just, and very acute too; but, unfortunately, so do I too. Do you remember old Lord Sefton's reply when the Bishop of Lincoln tried to repress him one day at dinner from entering upon old college recollections by saying, 'Oh, my lord, the devil was strong in us in those days'? 'I wish he was strong in me now, my Lord Bishop!' I am afraid I am something of his mind."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *March* 20, 1864.

"As it is likely I shall start to-morrow for Spezzia to give them a touch of my 'consular quality,' I send you a line to thank you for your kind note, and with it a portion (all I have yet done) of the next 'O'Dowd.' I shall, however, meditate as I go, and perhaps the Providence who supplies oddities to penny-a-liners may help me to one in the train.

"I thank you heartily for the offer of a mount, but I have grown marvellously heavy, in more ways than one, this last year or two; and the phrase of my daughter when ordering my horse to be saddled may illustrate the fact, as she said, 'Put the howdah on papa's elephant.'

"Don't fancy the Italians are not athletes. All the great performers of feats of strength come from Italy. Belzoni the traveller was one. They have a game here called *Paettone,* played with a ball as large as a child's head and flung to an incredible distance, which combines strength, skill, and agility. Then as to swimming, I can only say that I and my two eldest daughters can cross Spezzia—the width is three miles,—and yet we are beaten hollow every season by Italians. They swim in a peculiar way, turning from side to side and using the arms alternately; and when there is anything of a sea they never top the waves, but shoot through them, which gives immense speed, but it is a process I never could master. We had a swim last year with old General

Menegaldo, who swam the Lido with Byron: he is now eighty-four years old, and he swam a good mile along with us. I intend, if I can throw off my gout, to have a day or two in the blue water next week, though I suspect in your regions the idea would suggest a shiver. The weather is fine here now—in fact, too hot for many people."

To Dr Burbidge.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *March* 30, 1864.

"I was sorry to find last night that my proofs had not reached you, and as I want your opinion greatly, I send you mine, which I have not looked over yet.

"If it had not been for this detestable weather (and I can fancy how Spezzia looks in it, for even Florence is dismal) I'd have gone down to-day, for my wife has been a shade better since Sunday, and I want to have a good conscience and be assured that I cannot possibly find a house at Spezzia before I close for a little nook of a villa here—a small crib enough, but, like everything else, very dear.

"I have my misgivings, my more than misgivings, about the Derbys coming in. It is evident Lord D. does not wish power, and he is rather impatient at the hungry eagerness of poorer men, and so I suspect my own chances, if not to be tried now, will not be likely to survive for another occasion. I therefore resign myself, as people call what they cannot do more than grumble over, and 'make my book' to scribble on for a subsistence to the end."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Croce di Malta, Spezzia, *April* 5, 1864.

"Here I am visiting the authorities and being visited by them, playing off—and quite seriously too—the farce that we are all dignitaries, and of essential consequence to the States we severally serve. 'How we apples swim!' My only consolation is that there is no public to laugh at us—all the company are on the stage.

"I mean to get back to Florence by the end of the week. You shall have an instalment of T. B. immediately.

"If Lord D. gets his congress for Denmark it will be hard to dislodge the Government—the more with a two-million-and-a-half surplus. In fact, a good harvest is the Providence of the Whigs, and they are invariably pulled out of their scrapes by sheer luck. At the same time, if Lord Derby comes in, where could he find a Foreign Minister?"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Croce di Malta, Spezzia, *April* 6, 1864.

"The post has just brought me O'D. on 'Whist,' but no proof of 'The Woman in Diplomacy.' Perhaps I blundered and never sent it, or perhaps you got but did not like it. At all events, I return the 'Whist' by this post corrected. If there had been time I'd have dashed off an O'D. on French Justice in Criminal Cases, apropos to that late infamy of M. Pellier, but I fancied you had got enough of O'D. for this coming month, and probably you are of the same mind.

"I have done my consulars here—that is, I have called on the authorities and had them all to dinner, the bishop included; and we have fraternised very cordially and drank all manner of violent deaths to Mazzini, and to-morrow I go back into the obscurity of private life, and forget if I can that I have been a great man. Wasn't it a Glasgow dignitary who resented being called a man on a trial, and exclaimed, 'I'm not a man, I'm a bailie'?

"I see by 'The Telegraph' that Lord Clarendon has joined the Government and Stansfield left. There is a twofold game in that, for I don't despair of seeing them beaten if the Queen does not put pressure on Lord Derby, for there is a sentiment in his class that, with regard to the Crown, rises above all party considerations, and represents that old feudal feeling by which nobles stood round the monarchy at any personal loss or peril.

"That letter to 'The Times' about the Italian Government seizing Garibaldi's balance at his banker's is all rot. The Government simply sequestrated a revolutionary fund subscribed by revolutionists for public disturbance, and openly, flagrantly so done. Why will *patriots* never be truthful?"

To Dr Burbidge.

"Casa Capponi, *Thursday*, 10 [1864].

"These questionable publishers who say, 'Buy my share and I'll give you a book,' represent the

contract by which Sanders obtained Marola. That is, *he* bought the shares—viz., the house, and *they* gave him the book, meaning the 'Arsenal.' All fair and right so far! But nobody ever supposed that the share was connected with the book, had a market value, or was worth more to a purchaser than its price as a *share*. Now the opposite is precisely the mistake Sanders has fallen into. The rent of Marola represents in pounds the eagerness of M. Bolla to sign a certain agreement, but *I* have no such eagerness; for *me* no docks are digged, no mud excavated, no roads cut up and trees cut down; *I* have no interest in all the filth, dirt, drunkenness, or small assassinations introduced into a once lonely spot; I neither derive ten per cent profits or sixty per cent frauds. I have no part in the honest gains of Sanders or in the wholesale robberies of Bolla,—I merely want a house at the price of a house. Hence to pay £60 to £70 for a two-floor villa, furnished!—three chairs and the bath,—is certes too dear, not to add the Mackie difficulty. I have nothing definitely about my villa here, nor need I for some days.

"Is the wretched little toy-house under the Cappucines still unlet? and if so, what rent does M. Torri expect for it?—for, though *he* has *no straw*, he has more than the equivalent in the pestilent rascality of a true Spezzino.

"I hear from 'The Morning Post' people that Pam has at length got the Emperor's consent to be warlike. *À la remarque de la France* is a tune

we know better nowadays than 'Rule Britannia.' The story goes: *he*, L. N., is to have the *freyen deutschen Rhein*, and we are to be permitted to fill up again M. Lessep's canal at Suez—*suum cuique*.

"Who is to say *l'Alliance* brings no gain? One clears a river, t'other fills a drain.

"It is absurd to revile—as 'The Times' does—the Derbys for not announcing a policy. It is only a wise precaution in a bather who has once been robbed to hide his clothes when he next goes for a swim. This is all Dizzy is doing.

"I am now in a rare mess about 'Luttrell,' and cannot write a word."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Croce di Malta, Spezzia, *April* 7, 1864.

"I now send you the June 'Tony,' anxious to hear that you are satisfied. If I bore you by my insistence in this way, my excuse is that just as a sharp-flavoured wine turns quickest to vinegar, all the once lightness of heart I had has now grown to a species of irritable anxiety. Of course it is the dread a man feels of growing old lest he become more feeble than he even suspects, and I confess to you that I can put up with my shaky knees and swelled ankles better than I can with my shortcomings in brain matters. At all events, I am doing as well as I can, and quite ready to be taught to do better."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *April* 11, 1864.

"Only think of finding in 'The Galignani' yesterday this paragraph about Flynn. I send it to you, leaving it entirely to your choice to insert in next O'D. It has *this* merit, that it will serve to show O'D. is not *all imaginary*, but that it deals with real rogues as well as with men in buckram suits.

"I have got an 'O'Dowd' in my head that I think will amuse you if I can write it as it struck me,—a thing that does not always happen, I am sorry to say.

"The Italians were at first very savage about all your Garibaldian enthusiasm. Now, however, with true Italian subtlety they affect to take it as a national compliment. This is clever."

From Mr John Blackwood.

"Edinburgh, *April* 5, 1864.

"In walking home together yesterday afternoon, Aytoun and I had fits of laughter over O'Dowd. The thing that has tickled him is the victim of Cavour's eternal schemes for Italian progress, especially the plans turning up in the dead man's bureau. He agrees with me in thinking that you have completely taken second wind. I improved the occasion by commenting upon his own utter incapacity,—the lazy villain has not written a line for two years. A sheriffship and a professorship are fatal to literary industry. It would be well worth while for any Government to give any

man who is active in writing against them a good fat place, but it is fatal for them so to patronise their friends. God knows, however, that patronising their literary friends is a crime of which Governments are not often guilty, but I hope with all my heart that if we do come in, your turn, something good, will come at last."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *April* 17, 1864.

"How glad I am to be the first to say there is to be no 'mystery' between us. I have wished for this many a day, and have only been withheld from feeling that I was not quite certain whether my gratitude for the cheer and encouragement you have given me might not have run away with my judgment and made me forget the force of the Italian adage, 'It takes two to make a bargain.'

"How lightly you talk of ten years! Why, I was thirty years younger ten years ago than I am to-day. I'd have ridden at a five-foot wall with more pluck than I can summon now at a steep staircase. But I own to you frankly, if I had known *you* then as I do now, it might have wiped off some of this score of years. Even my daughters guess at breakfast when I have had a pleasant note from you.

"I have thought over what you say about Garibaldi's visit to Mazzini, and added a bit to tag to the article. I have thought it better to say nothing of Stansfield—I know him so little; and though I think him an ass, yet he might feel

like the tenor who, when told, 'Monsieur, vous chantez faux,' replied, 'Je le sais, monsieur, mais je ne veux pas qu'on me le dise.'

"Don't cut out the Haymarket ladies if you can help it. The whole thing is very naughty, but it can't be otherwise. I'll try and carry it on a little farther. I have very grand intentions —more paving-stones for the place my hero comes from.

"But ask Aytoun what he thinks of it, and if it be worth carrying out. The 'Devil's Tour' would be better than 'Congé.'

"The rhymes are often rough, but I meant them to be rugged lest it should be suspected I thought myself capable of verse — and I know better.

"Do what you like about the Flynn *P.S.* Perhaps it will be best not to make more mention of the rascal. I must tell you some day of my own scene with him at Spezzia, which 'The Telegraph' fellow has evidently heard of."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Florence, *Monday, April* 18, 1864.

"On second thoughts I remembered how far easier it was always to me to make a new rod than to splice an old one, so I send you the Devil as he is. If ever the vein comes to me, I can take him up hereafter. Let Aytoun judge whether it be safe or wise to publish. I myself think that a bit of wickedness has always a certain gusto in good company, while amongst

inferior folks it would savour of coarseness. This is too bleak an attempt at explaining what I mean, but you will understand me.

"Last verse—

> "For of course it lay heavily on his mind,
> And greatly distressed him besides, to find
> How these English had left him miles behind
> In this marvellous civilisation."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *April* 30, 1864.

"For the first time these eight days I have looked at my bottle—the ink-bottle—again. I am subject to periodical and very acute attacks of 'doing-nothingness,'—it would be euphuism to call it idleness, which implies a certain amount of indulgence, but mine are dreary paroxysms of incapacity to do anything other than sleep and eat and grumble.

"I wanted for the best of all possible reasons to be up and at work, and I could not. I tried to—but it wouldn't do! At least I have found out it would be far better to do nothing at all than to do what would be so lamentably bad and unreadable.

"When I first got these attacks—they are of old standing now—I really fancied it was the 'beginning of the end,' and that it was all up with me. Now I take them as I do a passing fit of gout, and hope a few days will see me through it.

"This is my excuse for not sending off the proof of 'Tony' before. I despatch it now, hoping it is all right, but beseeching you to see it is. I suppose you are right about Staffa, and that, like the sentinel who couldn't see the Spanish fleet, I failed for the same reason."

During the first fourteen or fifteen years of Lever's residence in Florence, Italy had been in the melting-pot. The Tuscan Revolution of 1848, the defeat of the Sardinians, and the abdication of Carlo Alberto in the following year, the earlier struggle of Garibaldi, the long series of troubles with Austria (ending in the defeat of the Austrians), feuds with the Papal States, insurrections in Sicily, the overthrow of the Pope's government, the Neapolitan war, and, to crown all, triumphant brigandage, had made things lively for dwellers in Italy. The recognition by the Powers of Victor Emanuel as king of United Italy promised, early in 1862, a period of rest; but the expectations of peace-lovers were shattered, for the moment, by Garibaldi's threatened march upon Rome. His defeat, his imprisonment in the fortress of Varignano, and his release, inspired hopes, well-founded, of the conclusion of the struggles (largely internecine) which had convulsed New Italy. Upon Garibaldi's release Lever naturally sought out his distinguished Spezzian neighbour, and one morning he had the pleasure of entertaining him at breakfast. It was said that the British Minister at Florence was

eager that the Italian patriot should be disabused of the favourable impressions he was supposed to entertain of the Irish revolutionary movement. The Vice-Consul at Spezzia found it necessary to explain to his guest that any overt expressions or acts of sympathy with Fenianism would be certain to alienate English sympathies. Garibaldi seemed to be somewhat surprised at this. He looked on England as a nation eager to applaud any patriotic or revolutionary movement. Lever is said—the authority is Major Dwyer—to have been unable to comprehend how a man so ignorant and childish as Garibaldi could have attained such vast influence over a people, and could have won such general renown.

In his statements about his friend's literary work or literary opinions, Major Dwyer is not a thoroughly safe guide. He had a weakness for patronising Lever, for declaring that he said or thought this or that—usually something which coincided with the Major's own opinion, and which showed the novelist at a disadvantage. Dwyer's conviction was that Lever the talker[1] was better than Lever

[1] The Major, amongst the many reminiscences of his friend confided to Dr Fitzpatrick, tells a tale of this period which shows that Lever, with all his tact, could occasionally allow temper to master discretion. A personage holding a high diplomatic post (which he had obtained notoriously through influence) said to Lever at some social gathering: "Your appointment is a sinecure, is it not?" "Not altogether," answered the consul. "But you are consul at Spezzia, and you live altogether at Florence," persisted the personage. "You got the post, I suppose, on account of your novels." "Yes, sir," replied Lever tartly, "I got the post in compliment to my brains: you got yours in compliment to your relatives."—E. D.

the writer, and that Lever the man was infinitely superior to both.

Possibly the vice-consul was amused at the simplicity of Garibaldi when Anglo-Irish affairs were under discussion. Anyhow, it is much more likely that Cornelius O'Dowd's true impressions are recorded in an article which he contributed to 'Blackwood's Magazine.' "It is not easy to conceive anything finer, simpler, more thoroughly unaffected, or more truly dignified than the man," writes Lever—"his noble head; his clever honest brown eyes; his finely-traced mouth, beautiful as a woman's, and only strung up to sternness when anything ignoble has outraged him; and, last of all, his voice contains a fascination perfectly irresistible, allied as you knew and felt these graces were with a thoroughly pure and untarnished nature."

While the Italian patriot lay wounded at Spezzia, Lever managed to get a photograph taken of him. The photograph (a copy of which he sent to Edinburgh) represents Garibaldi in bed, his red shirt enveloping him. Mrs Blackwood Porter, in the third volume of 'The House of Blackwood,' relates a most amusing anecdote of a situation arising out of the embarrassing attentions of sympathisers who would persist in visiting the invalid.

Lever's sketch in 'Maga' evoked from John Blackwood a very interesting letter.

From Mr John Blackwood.

"*April* 27, 1864.

"I am particularly obliged to you for the promptitude with which you did the bit about Garibaldi. It is, I think, the best thing that has been written about the General, and I hope he is worthy of it. You will see that the Garibaldi fever has been cut short, so that I shall have no opportunity of using the note of introduction you so kindly sent, but I am equally obliged. Fergusson (Sir William), the surgeon, is a very intimate friend and old ally of mine, and I have no doubt he has given genuine and sound advice. Garibaldi would doubtless have had innumerable invitations to No. 9 Piccadilly, and I hope the hero has not damaged himself. I have half a mind to write this joke to Fergusson, and call for an explicit statement of the hero's health. Seriously, he is well away at the present crisis, and we are making sufficient fools of ourselves without this wild outbreak of hero-worship. . . .

"Laurence Oliphant stayed with us for three days, and we had a 'fine time.' I never saw such a fellow for knowing people, pulling the wires, and being in the thick of it always. He is hand-and-glove with half the potentates and conspirators in Europe. Skeffy in his wildest flights is a joke to him. There is, however, no humbug about Oliphant; he is a good fellow and a good friend. He talked much of the pleasant days he had passed with you, and begged particularly to be remembered to you all. Knowing I could trust him, I told him the secret, the importance of keeping which he fully

appreciated, and will assist in throwing people off the scent, which 'O'Dowd' will, I think, put a good many upon. There have been surmises in the papers, but surmises are nothing. How is 'Tony' getting on, and the new 'O'Dowd'? I wish, indeed, we had come across each other in earlier life; but it is no use your talking of being seedy,—you are evidently as fresh as paint, and never wrote better, if so well."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *May* 5, 1864.

"I have just got home and found your note and its enclosed cheque. Why this should be so large I have no idea nor any means of guessing, for the Mag. has not yet arrived. You are right about the 'Devil,' but he alone knows when and how I shall be in the vein to go on with his experiences. I had to come back here hurriedly, which requires my returning to Spezzia in a day or so, a sad interruption to work, and coming awkwardly too, as I am driven to change my house,—the old jail-like palace I have lived in for fifteen years has just been bought by Government, and I am driven to a villa at some distance from Florence—a small little crib nicely placed in a bit of Apennine scenery, and quiet enough for much writing.

"I entirely agree with all you say of Oliphant: he is an able fellow, and a good fellow; and there is no *blague* whatever in his talking familiarly of 'swells,' for he has lived, and does live, much in their intimacy. He is not popular with the 'Diplos.'

nor F. O., but the chief, if not only, reason is, that he is a far cleverer fellow than most of them, and has had the great misfortune of having shown this to the world.

"I want much to be at 'Tony' again, but it will be some three or four days before I can settle down to work. When I have dashed off enough to send I will, even though not enough for a number.

"I see by 'The Telegraph' that the fleet is to go to the Baltic, but not for more than a demonstration. Does not this remind you of the Bishop of Exeter's compromise about the candles on the altar, 'That they might be there, but *not* lighted.' I believe, as a nation, we are the greatest humbugs in Europe; and, without intending it, the most illogical and inconsequent people the world ever saw.

"I hope your little people are all well again and over the measles and in the country with you, and that you are all as happy as I wish you.

"Supply the date of the Reform Bill for me in the 'New Hansard.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *May* 10, 1864.

"Herewith go three chapters of 'Tony.' With the best will in the world there are days when our dinners go off ill, our sherry is acrid, our *entrées* cold, and our jests vapid. Heaven grant (but I have my misgivings) that some such fatality may not be over these 'Tonys.' My home committee likes them better than I do; I pray heartily that *you* be of *this* mind.

"I shall be fretful and anxious till I hear from you about T. B., but I go off to-morrow to Spezzia, and not to be back till Wednesday the 18th,—all Consular, all Bottomry, all Official for eight mortal days, but

> "Of course I must show to the office 'I'm here,'
> And draw with good conscience two hundred a-year.
> I'd save fifty more, but of *that* I am rid well
> By the agency charges of Allston and Bidwell."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *May* 15, 1864.

"More power to you! as we say in Ireland, for your pleasant letter. I have got it, and I send you an O'D. I think you will like on 'Our Masterly Inactivity,' and another on 'Our Pensions for Colonial Governors.'

"As to next month's O'D., I don't know what will turn up; but [I am] like poor old Drury—the clergyman at Brussels—whose profound reliance on Providence once so touched an English lady that it moved her to tears. 'He uttered,' said she—telling the story to Sir H. Seymour, who told it to me—'he uttered one of the most beautiful sentiments I ever heard from the lips of a Christian: "When I have dined heartily and well, and drunk my little bottle of light Bordeaux, Mrs S.," said he, "where Mrs Drury or the children are to get *their* supper to-night or their breakfast to-morrow, I vow to God I don't know, *and I don't care.*"' Now if that be

not as sweet a little bit of hopeful trust in manna from heaven as one could ask for, I'm a Dutchman, and I lay it to my heart that somehow, somewhere, O'Dowderies will turn up for July as they have done for June, for I shall certainly need them. You will have had T. B. before this. I see you are stopping at my old 'Gite,' the Burlington, my hotel ever since I knew London. There was an old waiter there, Foster, — I remember him nigh thirty years, — who exercised towards me a sort of parental charge, and rebuked my occasional late hours and the light companions who laughed overmuch at breakfast with me in the coffee-room. If he is *in vivente*, remember me to him."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *May* 16, 1864.

"I have just had your note, and am relieved to find that I have not lost the 'Colonial Governors,' which I feared I had. I have added a page to it. I have re-read it carefully, but I don't think it radical. Heaven knows, I have nothing of the Radical about me but the poverty. At all events, a certain width of opinion and semi-recklessness as to who or what he kicks does not ill become O'D., whose motto, if we make a book of him, I mean to be 'Tros Tyriusve mihi nullo discrimine agetur,'—

> "I care not a fig
> For Tory or Whig,
> But sit in a bowl and kick round me.

"Though the paper I sent yesterday on 'Our Masterly Inactivity' would be very apropos at this juncture, there will scarcely be time to see a proof of it, seeing that it could not be here before this day week. If you cannot revise it yourself, it will be better perhaps to hold it back, though I feel the moment of its 'opportunity' may pass. Do what you think best. My corrections of the proof I send off now will have to be closely looked to, and the MS. is to come in between the last paragraph and the part above it."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *June* 7, 1864.

"We got into our little villa yesterday (it would not be little out of Italy, for we have seven salons), and are very pleased with it. We are only a mile from Florence, and have glorious views of the city and the Val d'Arno on every side.

"The moving has, however, addled my head awfully; indeed, after all had quitted the old Casa Capponi, a grey cat and myself were found wandering about the deserted rooms, not realising the change of domicile. What it can be that I cling to in my old room of the Capponi I don't know (except a hole in the carpet perhaps), but certainly I do not feel myself in writing vein in my new home. . . .

"I hear strange stories of disagreements amongst the Conservatives, and threats of splits and divisions. Are they well founded, think you? The social severance of the party, composed as it is

of men who never associated freely together, as the Whigs did and do, is a great evil. Indeed I think the ties of our party are weaker than in the days when men dined more together.

"When C. leaders, some years back, offered to put me at the head of a Conservative Press, I said this. Lord Eglinton and Lord Naas were of my mind, but the others shrugged their shoulders as though to say the world was not as it used to be. Now I don't believe *that*."

To Dr Burbidge.

"FLORENCE, *Thursday*, [? *June*] 1864.

"I have taken a villa—a cottage in reality, but dear enough,—the only advantage being that it *looks* modest; and just as some folk carry a silver snuff-box made to look like tin, I may hope to be deemed a millionaire affecting simplicity."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, *June* 14, 1864.

"I looked forward eagerly to your promised letter about O'Dowd. No one could do an imaginary portrait of a foreignised Irishman—all drollery about the eyes, and bearded like a pard—better than Hablot Browne (Phiz), and I think he could also do *all* that we need for illustration, which would be little occasional bits on the page and tailpieces. If he would take the trouble to *read* the book (which he is not much given to), and if he would really interest himself in it (not

so unlikely now, as he is threatened with a rival in Marcus Stone), he could fully answer all our requirements. I would not advise any regular 'plates,' mere woodcuts in the page, and an occasional rambling one *crawling over the page*. What do *you* think?"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *June* 16, 1864.

"I am delighted with all your plans about 'O'Dowd,' and though I do not believe there will be much to alter, I will go carefully over the sheets when I get them. My notion always was that it would take some time to make a public for a kind of writing more really French in its character than English, but that if we could only once get 'our hook in,' we'd have good fishing for many a day.

"If my reader will only stand it, I'll promise to go on as long as he likes, since it is simply putting on paper what goes on in my head all day long, even (and unluckily for me) when I am at work on other things.

"Don't give *me* any share in the book, or you'll never get rid of ten copies of it, my luck being like that of my countryman who said, 'If I have to turn hatter, I'd find to-morrow that God Almighty would make people without heads.' Seriously, if by any turn of fortune I should have a hundred pounds in the 'threes,' the nation would be in imminent risk of a national bankruptcy. Give me whatever you like, and be guided by the fact that I am not a bit too sanguine about these

things *en masse*. It is all the difference in the world to read a paper or a vol.; it is whether you are asked to taste a devilled kidney or to make your dinner of ten of them. At all events, the venture will be some test of public taste."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, VILLA MORELLI, *June* 24, 1864.

"The devil take my high office! I am obliged to go down to Spezzia on Monday, and shall probably lose a week, when I am sore pressed for time too.

"What you say of buying up the disputed bit of Denmark reminds me of an incident that occurred in my house in Ireland. There were two whist-parties playing one night in the same room. One was playing pound points and twenty on the rubber (of which I was one); the others were disputing about half-crowns, and made such a row once over the score that Lord Ely, who was at our table, cried out, 'Only be quiet and we'll pay the difference.' D., the artillery colonel, was so offended that it was hard to prevent him calling Ely out. Now perhaps the Danes might be as touchy as the soldier.

"Send me the Mag. as *early as you can* this month. It will comfort me at Spezzia if I can take it down there, but address me still Florence as usual.

"What do you think of an O'D. on the Serial Story-writer? I shall be all the better pleased if Lawson O'D. stand over for August, for I shall be

close run for time this month to come, and it is no joke writing with the thermometer at 93° in the shade. In Ireland the belief is that a man who is dragged out to fight a duel against his will is sure to be shot, and I own I am superstitious enough to augur very ill of our going to war in the same reluctant fashion."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *June* 30, 1864.

"I send off to-day (*sit fauste dies*) by book-post 'O'Dowd' corrected, and I enclose a few lines to open with a dedication to Anster. I am not quite *sure* of the 'notice,' nor shall I be till I hear if you like it. I have gout and blue devils on me, but you can always do more for me than colchicum if you say 'all right.'

"I hope we shall have a nice-looking book and a smart outside, and, above all, that we shall appear before the end of July, when people begin to scatter. I am very anxious about it all.

"I am not able to go down to Spezzia for some days, and if I can I shall attack 'Tony,'—not but the chances are sorely against anything pleasant if I mix with the characters any share of my present idiosyncrasy. . . .

"I count on hearing from you now oftener that you are away from Whitebait. I was getting very sulky with the dinner-parties of which I was not a sharer. I met Mr and Mrs Sturgis at Thackeray's at dinner. They were there, I think, on the day when one of Thackeray's guests left

the table to send him a challenge — the most absurd incident I ever witnessed. The man was a Mr Synge, formally Attaché at Washington, and now H.M.'s Consul at the Sandwich Islands."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *July* 4, 1864.

"I merely write a line. Your note and cheque came all right to me this morning. My thanks for both. I have had four mortal days of stupidity, and the fifth is on me this morning; but after I have had a few days at Spezzia I hope to be all right and in the harness again.

"If Dizzy's vote of censure is not very much amplified in his *exposé,* it ought not to be difficult to meet it. The persistent way he dogged Palmerston to say something, anything, is so like Sir Lucius O'Trigger seizing on the first chance of a contradiction and saying, 'Well, sir, I differ from you there.'

"Pam's declaration that 'war' was possible in certain emergencies—when, for instance, the king should have been crucified and the princesses vanished—was the only thing like devilling I heard from him yet. This is, however, as palpably imbecility as anything they could do, and *one* symptom, when a *leading one*, is as good as ten thousand.

"Old Begration once told the Duke of Wellington that the discovery of a French horse-shoe 'not roughed' for the frost in the *month of October* was the reason for the burning of Moscow. They

said: 'These French know nothing of our climate; one winter here would kill them.' It was the present Duke told me this story.

"You will have had my O'D. on the Conference before this, and if the Debate offer anything opportune for comment I'll tag it on. The fact is, one can always do with an 'O'Dowd' what the parson accomplished when asked to preach a charity sermon,—graft the incident on the original discourse. Indeed I feel at such moments that my proper sphere would have been the pulpit. Perhaps I am more convinced of this to-day, as I have gout on me. Don't you know what Talleyrand said to the friend who paid him a compliment on his fresh and *handsome* appearance as he landed at Dover?—'Ah! it's the sea-sickness, perhaps, has done it.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *July* 10, 1864.

"What a hearty thing it was with you to send me the Bishop's letter. I hope I may keep it. Do you know that it was by the merest accident that I did not allude to *himself* in the paper—or, rather, it was out of deference to his apron; for one of the most brilliant evenings I ever remember in my life was having the Bishop and O'Sullivan to dine with me and only two others, and Harry Griffin was the king of the company. Moore used to say, when complimented on his singing the melodies, 'Ah! if you were to hear

Griffin.' But why don't he recognise me? When we are ready with our vol. i. I shall ask you to send one or two, or perhaps three or four, copies to some friends. Let me beg one for the Bishop, and I'll send a note with it. I think your note *will* do me good. It *has* already, and I am down and hipped and bedevilled cruelly.

"Palmerston will, I take it, have a small majority, but will he dissolve?

"I only ask about the length of T. B. on *your* account; for my own part I rather like writing the story, and if the public would stand it, I'd make it as long as 'Clarissa Harlowe.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *July* 11, 1864.

"I send you a short O'D. on the Debate, and so I shall spare you a letter. If, as now, there is no time for a proof,—though I think there may,—look to it closely yourself. My hand at times begins to tremble (I never give it any cause), and I find I can scarcely decipher some words. How *you* do it is miraculous. My gout will not *fix*, but hangs over me with dreariness and 'devil-may-careisms,' so that though I have scores of great intentions I can *do* nothing.

"I count a good deal on a two hours' swim, and I am off to take it by Wednesday. If the sharks lay hold on me, finish T. B. Marry him to Alice, and put the rest of the company to bed indiscriminately."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *July* 12, 1864.

"I send you with this a few lines to finish the serial O'D., a few also to complete 'Be always ready with the Pistol,' and—God forgive me for the blunder!—two stray pages that ought to come in somewhere (not where it is numbered) in the last-sent O'D. on 'Material Aid.' Will your ingenuity be able to find the place—perhaps the end? If not, *squash* it, and the mischief will not be great.

"I start to-night for the sea-side, so that if you want to send me a proof for the next ten days, send it in *duo*, one to Spezzia and the other here, by which means you shall have either back by return of post.

"The thermometer has taken a sudden start upwards to-day, 26° Réamur, and work is downright impossible. The *cicale* too make a most infernal uproar, for every confounded thing, from a bug to a baritone, sings all day in Italy."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, FLORENCE, *July* 23, 1864.

"I was getting a great stock of health, swimming and boating at Spezzia, when I was called back by the illness of my youngest daughter, a sort of feverish attack brought on by the excessive heat of the weather, 92° and 93° every day in the shade. She is, thank God, a little better now, and I hope the severest part is over. When shall I be at work again? There never was so much idleness assisted by an evil destiny.

"What a jolly letter you sent me. I read it over half a dozen times, even after I knew it all, just as an unalterable toper touches his lips to the glass after emptying it. I wish I could be as hopeful about O'D.,—not exactly *that*, but I wish I could know it would have some success, and for once in my life the wish is not entirely selfish.

"You will, I am sure, tell me how it fares, and if you see any notices, good or bad, tell me of them.

"What a strange line Newdigate has taken,—not but he has a certain amount of right in the middle of all the confusion of his ideas. Dizzy unquestionably *coquetted* with Rome. Little Earle, his secretary, was out here on a small mission of intrigue, and I did my utmost to show him that for every priest he 'netted' he would inevitably lose two Protestants—I mean in Ireland. As for the worldly wit of the men who think that they can drive a good bargain with the 'Romish' clergy, all I can say is that they have no value in my eyes. The vulgarest curé that ever wore a coal-scuttle hat is more than the match of all the craft in Downing Street.

"You are quite right, it would do me immense good to breathe your bracing air, but it 'mauna be.' I wish I could see a chance of *your* crossing the Alps—is it on the cards?

"I wish I was twenty years younger and I'd make an effort to get into Parliament. Like my friend Corney, my friends always prophesied a

success to me in something and somewhere that I have never explored—but so it is.

"Oh! for the books that have never been written,
With all the wise things that nobody has read.
And oh! for the hearts that have never been smitten,
Nor heard the fond things that nobody has said.

"*My* treasures are, I suspect, safely locked in the same secure obscurity. *N'importe!* at this moment I'd rather be sure my little girl would have a good night than I'd be Member for Oxford."

To Mr Alexander Spencer.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *July* 23, 1864.

"It would be unfair amidst all your labours to expect you could read through the volume of 'Corney O'Dowd' that Blackwood will have already sent—or a few days more will bring—to you. Still, if you will open it, and here and there look through some of those jottings-down, I know they will recall me to your memory. It is so very natural to me to half-reason over things, that an old friend [? like] yourself will recognise me on every page, and for this reason it is that I would like to imagine you reading it. My great critics declare that I have done nothing so good since the 'Dodds,'—and now, enough of the whole theme!

"Here we are in a pretty villa on a south slope of the Apennines, with Florence at our feet and a glorious foreground of all that is richest in

Italian foliage between us and the city. It is of all places the most perfect to write in,—beauty of view, quiet, silence, and seclusion all perfect,—but somehow I suppose I have grown a little foot-sore on the road. I do not write with my old facility. I sit and think—or fancy I think—and find very little is done after [all].

"The dreary thought of time lost and talent misapplied—for I ought never to have taken to the class of writing that I did—*will* invade, and, instead of plodding steadily along the journey, I am like one who sits down to cry over the map of the country to be traversed.

"I go to Spezzia occasionally — the fast mail now makes it but five hours. The Foreign Office is really most indulgent: they ask nothing of me, and in return I give them exactly what they ask.

"My wife is a little better — that is, she can move about unassisted and has less suffering. Her malady, however, is not checked. The others are well. As for myself, I am in great bodily health, —lazy and indolent, as I always was, and more given to depressions, perhaps, but also more patient under them than I used to be."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Florence, *Saturday, July* 30.

"Yours has just come. O'D. is very handsome. Confound the public if they won't like them! Nothing could be neater and prettier than the book. How I long to hear some good tidings of it!

"My daughter had a slight relapse, but is now doing all well and safely.

"I think that the Irish papers—'The Dub. E. Mail' and 'Express'—would review us if copies were sent, and perhaps an advertisement.

"I know you'll let me hear, so I don't importune you for news.

"Your cheque came all safe; my thanks for it. The intense heat is such now that I can only write late at night, and very little then."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Aug.* 3, 1864.

"Unshaven, dishevelled,
I sit all bedevilled;
Your news has upset me,—
It was meet it should fret me.
What! two hundred and fifty!
Is the public so thrifty?
Or are jokes so redundant
And funds so abundant
That 'O'Dowd' cannot find more admirers than this!
I am sure in the City
'Punch' is reckoned more witty,
And Cockneys won't laugh
Save at Lombard Street chaff;
But of *gentlemen*, surely there can be no stint,
Who would like dinner drolleries dished up in print,
And to *read* the same nonsense would gladly be able
That they'd laugh at—if heard—o'er the claret at table
The sort of light folly that sensible men
Are never ashamed of—at least now and then.
For even the gravest are not above chaff,
And I know of a bishop that loves a good laugh.

Then why will they deny me,
And why won't they buy me?
I know that the world is full of cajolery,
And many a dull dog will trade on *my* drollery,
Though he'll never be brought to confess it aloud
That the story you laughed at he stole from O'Dowd;
But the truth is, I feel if my book is unsold,
That my fun, like myself, it must be—has grown old.
And though the confession may come with a damn,
I must own it—*non sum qualis eram.*

"I got a droll characteristic note from the Duke of Wellington and a cordial hearty one from Sir H. Seymour. I'd like to show you both, but I am out of sorts by this sluggishness in our [circulation]. The worst of it is, I have nobody to blame but myself.

"Send a copy of O'D. to Kinglake with my respects and regards. He is the only man (except C. O'D.) in England who understands Louis Nap."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *Aug.* 9, 1864.

"I am just sent for to Spezzia to afford my Lords of the Admiralty a full and true account of all the dock accommodation possible there, which looks like something in 'the wind'; the whole 'most secret and confidential.'

"I am sorry to leave home, though my little girl is doing well. I have *many* causes of anxiety, and for the first time in my whole life have begun to pass sleepless nights, being from my birth as sound a sleeper as Sancho Panza himself.

"Of course Wilson was better than anything he ever did — but why wouldn't he? He was a noble bit of manhood every way; he was my *beau idéal* of a fine fellow from the days I was a schoolboy. The men who link genius with geniality are the true salt of the earth, but they are marvellously few in number. I don't bore you, I hope, asking after O'D.; at least you are so forgiving to my importunity that I fancy I am merciful."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *Aug.* 11, 1864.

"I forgot to tell you that the scene of the collision in the longer O'D. is all invented—there was nothing of it in 'The Times' or anywhere else. How right you are about the melodramatic tone in the scene between Maitland and his Mother! It is worse. It is bow-wow! It is Minerva Press and the rest of it, but all that comes of a d——d public. I mean it all comes of novel-writing for a d——d public that like novels,—and novels are —novels.

"I am very gouty to-day, and I have a cross-grained man coming to dinner, and my women (affecting to keep the mother company) won't dine with me, and I am sore put out.

"Another despatch! I am wanted at Spezzia, —a frigate or a gunboat has just put in there and no consul. Captain Short, of the *Sneezer* perhaps, after destroying Chiavari and the organ-men, put in for instructions. By the way, Yule was dining with Perry, the Consul-General at Venice,

the other day, when there came an Austrian official to ask for the Magazine with *Flynn's Life* as a *pièce de conviction!* This would be grand, but it is beaten hollow by another fact. In a French 'Life of Wellington' by a staff officer of distinction, he corrects some misstatements thus, 'Au contraire, M. Charles O'Malley, raconteur,' &c. Shall I make a short 'O'Dowd' out of the double fiasco? Only think, a two-barrelled blunder that made O'Dowd a witness at law, and Charles O'Malley a military authority!

"When I was a doctor, I remember a Belgian buying 'Harry Lorrequer' as a medical book, and thinking that the style was singularly involved and figurative.

"Oh dear, how my knuckle is singing, but not like the brook in Tennyson; it is no 'pleasant tune.'

"Have you seen in 'The Dublin E. Mail' a very civil and cordial review of 'O'Dowd,' lengthy and with extracts? What a jolly note I got from the Bishop of L[imerick]. He remembers a dinner I gave to himself and O'Sullivan, Archer Butler, and Whiteside, and we sat till 4 o' the morning! *Noctes—Eheu fugaces!*

"Please say that some one has ordered 'O'Dowd' and liked it, or my gout will go to the stomach."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Florence, *Aug.* 12, 1864.

"I recant: I don't think the scene so bad as I did yesterday. I sent it off *corrected this night's*

post—and try and agree with me. Remember that Maitland's mother (I don't know who his father was) was an actress,—why wouldn't she be a little melodramatic? Don't you know what the old Irishwoman said to the sentry who threatened to run his bayonet into her? 'Devil thank you! sure, that's you're thrade.' So Mad. Brancaleoni was only giving a touch of her 'thrade' in her Cambyses vein.

"I'm off to Spezzia, and my temper is so bad my family are glad to be rid of me. All the fault of the public, who won't admire 'O'Dowd.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Aug.* 24, 1864.

"My heartiest thanks for the photograph. It is the face of a friend and, *entre nous*, just now I have need of it, for I am very low and depressed, but I don't mean to worry you with these things. What a fine fellow your Colonel is! I am right proud that he likes 'O'Dowd,' and so too of your friend Smith, because I know if the officers are with me we must have the rank and file later on. I read the 'Saturday Review' with the sort of feeling I have now and then left a dull dinner-party, thinking little of myself but still less of the company. Now, I may be stupid, but I'll be d——d if I'm as bad as that fellow!

"One's friends of course are no criterion, but I *have* got very pleasant notices from several, and none condemnatory, but still I shall be sorely

provoked if *your* good opinion of me shall not be borne out by the public. Galileo said 'Ê pur se muove,' but the Sacred College outvoted him. God grant that you may not be the only man that doesn't think me a blockhead!

"I want to be at 'Tony,' but I am so very low and dispirited I shall make a mess of whatever I touch, and so it is better to abstain.

"If I could only say of John Wilson one-half that I *feel* about him. If I could only tell Cockneydom that they never had, and probably never will have, a measure to take the height of so noble a fellow, one whose very manliness lifted him clear and clean above their petty appreciation, just as in his stalwart vigour he was a match for any score of them, and whom they would no more have ventured to scoff at while living than they would have dared to confront foot to foot upon the heather. If I could say, in fact, but a tithe of what his name calls up within me, I *could* write a paper on the *Noctes*, but the theme would run away with me. Wilson was the only hero of my boy days, and I never displaced him from the pedestal since. By Jove! 'Ebony' had giants in those days. Do you know that no praise of O'D. had the same flattery for me as comparing it with the papers by Maginn long ago. So you see I am ending my days under the flag that fascinated my first ambition: my grief is, my dear Blackwood, that you have not had the first of the liquor and not the lees of the cask."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, FLORENCE, *Sept.* 5, 1864.

"I have just had your letter and enclosure,—many thanks for both. I hope you may like the O'D. I sent you for next month. Don't be afraid of my breaking down as to time, though I may as to merit. You may always rely on my punctuality — and I am vain of it, as the only orderly quality in my whole nature. . . .

"I am very anxious about 'Tony.' I want to make a good book of it, and my very anxiety may mar my intentions. Tell me another thing: When 'Tony' appears in three vols., should it come out without name, or a *nom de plume*, — which is better?

"Why does not 'The Times' notice O'D.? They are talking of all the tiresome books in the world, —why not mine?

"I have often thought a pleasant series of papers might be made of the great Irish Viceroys, beginning at John D. of Ormond, Chesterfield, D. Portland, &c., with characteristic sketches of society at their several periods. Think of a tableau with Swift, Addison, &c., at Templeton's *levée!*

"The thought of this, and a new cookery-book showing *when* each thing ought to be eaten, and making a sort of gastronomic tour, have been addling my head the last three nights. But now I sit down steadily to 'Tony,' and 'God give me a good deliverance.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Florence, *Sept.* 8.

"I am in such a hang-dog humour that I must write you.

"I suspect Anster *has* got his O'D., but his damnable writing has misled me. What I thought was a complaint for its non-arrival was, I imagine, a praise of its contents.

"I send you the rest of 'Tony' for October: God grant it be better than I think it is. But if you only saw me you'd wonder that I could even do the bad things I send you.

"Tell me, are you sick of the cant of people who uphold servants and talk of them as an 'interesting class'? I think them the greatest rascals breathing, and would rather build a jail for them than a refuge. I want to O'Dowd them; shall I?

"Gout is overcoming me completely! Isn't it too hard to realise both Dives and Lazarus in oneself at once?"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Sept.* 19.

"I send you the last chap. for the November 'Tony,' and I want all your most critical comment on the Envoy, because, as the book draws to the end, I desire to avoid the crying sin of all my stories, a huddled-up conclusion. Be sure you tell me all my shortcomings, for even if I cannot amend them I'll bear in mind the impression they must create, and, so far as I can, deprecate my reader's

wrath. You have not answered me as to the advisability of a name or no name,—a matter of little moment, but I'd like your counsel on it. My notion is this. If 'Tony' be likely to have success as a novel when published entire, a name might be useful for future publication, and as to that, I mean futurity, what would you say to a Stuart story, taking the last days of Charles Edward in Florence, and bringing in the great reforming Grand Duke, Pietro-Leopoldo and Horace Mann, &c. ?[1]

"I have been mooning over this for the last week. The fact is, when I draw towards the close of a story I can't help hammering at another: like the alderman who said, 'I am always, during the second course, imagining what will come with the woodcocks.' Mind above all that no thought of me personally is to interfere with other Magazine arrangements, for it is merely as the outpouring of a confession that I speak now of a *story*, and if you don't want me, or don't want so much of me, you will say so.

"As I told you once before, I believe I am, or rather was—for there is very little 'am' left—better at other things than story-writing, and certainly I *like* any other pen labour more. But this shall be as you determine. . . .

"Give me some hints as to the grievances of the 'Limited Liability Schemes.' What are the weak points? Brief me!

[1] Lever must have intended to recast and to rewrite the adventures of "Gerald Fitzgerald, the Chevalier," the story which appeared as a serial in 'The Dublin University' in 1859.—E. D.

"I have a notion that a course of O'Dowd lectures on Men and Women would be a success, orally given. What think you?"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, *Sept.* 20.

"In my haste of correction in T. B. I believe I left 'Castel d'Uovo' 'Castel Ovo'; *now it should be the former*—pray look to it. God help me! but if I live a little longer I shall find spelling impossible. Till I began to correct the press I never made a mistake; and now I understand what is meant by the tree of knowledge, for when once you begin to see there's a right and a wrong way to do anything, it's 'all up' with you. In my suspicion that the missing O'Ds. might possibly have come to your hand, I asked you to cancel [the bit] about Pam. *Pray do so.* It was ill-natured and gouty, though true; and, after all, he is a grand old fellow with all his humbug, and if we do make too much of him the fault is ours, not his.

"I have just got yours, 16th, and my mind is easy about the O'Ds. which never reached me. It will be easier, however, when I know you have squashed all about Pam.

"I am now doubly grieved to have been worrying about your nephew, but I am sincerely glad to know it is no more than a fall. I believe I have not a bone from my head to my heel unmarked by horse accidents, and every man who really rides meets his misadventures. Whenever I hear

of a man who never falls, I can tell of one who never knew how to ride.

"Now of all my projects and intentions never bore yourself a minute: the fact is—writing to *you* pretty much as I talk at home, I have said some of the fifty things that pass through my vagabondising brains, just as I have been for the last twenty years plotting the Grand Book that is to make me.

"But now that you *know me better*, treat all these as the mere projects of a man whose only dream is hope, and whose case is all the worse that he is a 'solitary tippler'; and, above all, trust me to do my best—my very best—for 'Tony,' which I am disposed to think about the best thing I have done."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Sept.* 26, 1864.

"Don't be afraid that I am impatient to close 'Tony'; if it only 'suited your book' I'd go on with him for a twelvemonth. And now tell me, does it make any difference to you if he should go on to the January No.? I mean, does it spoil magazine symmetry that he should appear in a new volume? Not that I opine this will be necessary, only if it should I should like to know.

"You must send me 'Tony' in sheets, as you did O'D., to revise and reflect over, and I'll begin at him at once.

"I knew well what a blow Speke's death would

be to you, and I am truly sorry for the poor fellow.

"I don't remember one word I write if I don't see a proof, so I forget what I said about an idea I had of a story. At all events, as Curran said he picked up all his facts from the opposite counsel's statement, I'll soon hear what you say, and be able to guess what I said myself.

"I'm gout up to the ears,—flying, dyspeptic, blue-devil gout,—with a knuckle that sings like a tea-kettle and a toe that seems in the red-hot bite of a rabid dog, and all these with—— But I swore not to bother you except it be to write to me."

To Mr John Blackwood.

[Undated.]

"I am up to my neck in Tony,—dress him, dine with him, and yesterday went to his happy marriage with (this for Mrs Blackwood and yourself) Dolly Stuart, he having got over his absurd passion, and found out (what every man doesn't) the girl he *ought* to marry.

"I am doing my best to make the wind-up good. Heaven grant that my gout do not mar my best intentions!

"This informal change of capital has raised my rent! More of Cavour's persecution. I told you that man will be my ruin.

"Whenever you have time write to me. There are such masses of things you are to answer you will forget one-half if you don't make a clearance.

"I am very sulky about the coldness the *public* have shown O'D. in its vol. form. Why, confound them!—— But I won't say what is on my lips."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Oct.* 4, 1864.

"Your own fault if you have to say 'Damn his familiarity'; but if you won't return it you can at least say 'Damn O'Dowd.'

"Your cheque came all safe this morning. I wish I had not to add that it was a dissolving view that rapidly disappeared in my cook's breeches-pocket.

"I suppose my gout must be on the decline from the very *mild* character of the 'O'Dowd' I now send you. Tell your uncle if he won't write to me about my forty-one projects, I'll make an O'D. on Golf-players, and God help him!

"I hope I shall meet you one of these days. I am as horsey as yourself, and would a devilish deal sooner be astride of the pigskin than sitting here inditing O'Dowderies."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Oct.* 14, 1864.

"I return O'D. corrected. You are right, and I expunged the paragraph you mention, and changed the expression of the joke—a d——d bad one—against the Yankees; but I wanted the illustration, and couldn't miss it.

"I shall carry on 'Tony' to January, and will

want the chapter you sent me now to open December No. So much for the past. Now for what I have some scruples to inflict on you, but I can't help it. I want, if it suits you, to take the O'D., — that is, the present vol., and that which is ready, say, in January or February,— and give me anything you think it worth for my share of it, for I am greatly hampered just now. My poor boy left a number of debts (some with brother officers); and though nothing could be more considerate and gentleman-like than their treatment of me, and the considerate way they left me to my own time to pay, pay I must. What I am to receive for 'Tony' will have to be handed over *en masse*, and yet only meet less than half what I owe. Now, my dear Blackwood, do not mistake me, and do not, I entreat, read me wrong: I don't want you to do anything by me through any sense of your sympathy for these troubles,—because if you did so, I could never have the honest feeling of independence that enables me to write to you as I do, and as your friend,—but I want you to understand that if it *accords with your plans* to take 'O'Dowd' altogether to yourself, it would much help *me;* and if for the *future* you would so accept it, giving me anything you deem the whole worth, all the better for me. By this means I could get rid of some of my cares: there are heavier ones behind, but these I must bear how I may.

"I have been frank with you in all, and you will be the same with me.

"You are right, the present day is better for novels than the past—at least, present-day readers say so. If you like I will get up a story to begin in April, 'The New Charter,' but I won't think of it till I have done 'Tony,' which I own to you I like better on re-reading than I thought I should. Do you?

"Nothing is truer than what you say about my over-rapid writing. In the O'Ds. they are all the better for it, because I could talk them a hundred times better than I could write them; but where constructiveness comes in, it is very different."

To Dr Burbidge.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Oct.* 21, 1864.

"Though I have only been detained here by my wife's illness, and should have been at Spezzia ere this, it was so far well that I was here to meet a perfect rush of friends and acquaintances who have come. Hudson, Perry from Venice, Delane, Pigott, D. Wolff, all here, and a host more, and as my wife is again up, we have them at various times and seasons, and a big dinner of them to-morrow.

"Renfrew of 'The D. News' tells me that O'D. was a great London success, and that the literary people like it and praised it,—evidence, thought I, that they're not afraid of its author. He adds that I am not generally believed to have written it.

"I have not been up to work the last two days, and a remnant of a cold still keeps me 'a-sneezin'."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, FLORENCE, *Oct.* 23.

"Your generous treatment of me relieves me of one great anxiety and gives me another—that I may not prove to you as good a bargain as I meant to be; but whatever comes of it, I'll take care you shall not *lose* by me.

"I thank you heartily; and for the kind terms of your note even more than for the material aid. From the days of my schoolboy life I never did anything well but under kind treatment, and yours has given me a spring and a courage that really I did not know were left in me.

"I hope vol. (or rather 'book') ii. of 'O'Dowd' will be better than the first. Some of the bits are, I know, better; but in any case, if it should fall short of what I hope, *you* shall not be the sufferer.

"I am glad that you kept back the 'S. Congresses.' I send you herewith one on the 'Parson Sore Throat,' and I think you will like it. I think I have done it *safely;* they are 'kittle cattle,' but I have treated them gingerly.

"I could swear you will agree with me in all I say of the 'Hybrids,' and I think I see you, as you read it, join in with me in opinion.

"I am turning over an O'D. about Banting (but I want his book—could you send it to me?), and one on the Postal Stamp mania, and these would probably be variety enough for December No.,—'S. Congresses,' 'Conservatives,' 'Parsonitis,' &c.

"My wife continues still so ill that, though I am

wanted at Spezzia, I cannot go down. I hope, however, that to-morrow or next day she may be well enough to let me leave without anxiety.

"Perry, a consul-general at Venice, has just promised me a photo of Flynn, taken by the Austrian authorities during his imprisonment at Verona. I'll send it to you when it comes.

"Did you ever see the notice of O'D. in 'The Daily News'? It was most handsome, and the D. U. M. was also good. All the London papers have now reviewed it but 'The Times,' and the stranger [this], as Lucas, is very well affected towards me.

"Once again, and from my heart, I thank you for responding so generously to my request."

To Dr Burbidge.

"*Tuesday*, [? *Oct.*] 23, 1864.

"I had believed I was to be at Spezzia before this, but my wife still continues in a very precarious way, and I was afraid to leave her.

"I am, besides, hard at work closing 'Tony,' and getting another vol. of 'O'Dowd' ready for 1st of January. I have worked very steadily and, for *me*, most industriously the entire month, but my evenings are always lost, as people are now passing through to Rome.

"Hudson has taken a house near Florence, and Labouchere come back, so that *some* talkers there are at least.

"I mean to run down so soon as I finish correctings, &c., at eight or ten days at furthest."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, *Oct.* 27, 1864.

"How strange a hit you made when you said, 'I knew L. N. as well as if we had drunk together.' I was a fellow-student with him at Göttingen in 1830,[1] and lived in great intimacy with him. There was a Scotchman there at the same time named Dickson, a great botanist, who has, I believe, since settled in London as a practising physician in Bryanstone Square. L. Nap. went by the name of Ct. Fattorini. He never would know Dickson, and used to leave me whenever D. came in. It was not for two years after that I learned he was 'the Bonaparte.' Our set consisted of L. N., Adolph V. Decken (who afterwards married the sister of the Duchess of C——, who now lives in Hanover), Beuliady the Home Minister, and Ct. Bray the Bavarian Envoy at Vienna; I, the penny-a-liner, being the complement of the party. I have had very strange companionships and strange turns in life, and when I have worked out my O'Dowd vein I'll give you an autobiography.

"I now send you a political O'D. on L. N., not over civil; but I detest the man, and I suspect I *know* him and read him aright. Banting I did without waiting for his book; but if it comes I will perhaps squeeze something out of it.

"I am crippled with gout, and can scarcely hold a pen. The bit on doctors is simply padding, and don't put it in if you don't like; but the No. for December will, I think, be a strong one.

[1] The date is incorrect. Lever's Göttingen period was 1828.

"Sir Jas. Hudson is with me, but I am too low even for his glorious companionship—and he has no equal. Wolff is here, and all to stay for the winter.

"What do you think of my advertising O'D. at the end of the Banting paper? Does it not remind you of the epitaph to the French hosier, where, after the enumeration of his virtues as husband and father, the widow announces that she 'continues the business at the old estab., Rue Neuve des Petits Champs,' &c., &c.?"

To Dr Burbidge.

"Florence, *Nov.* 3, 1864.

"Bulwer the Great has stayed here, and will not leave till to-morrow, and if you see Rice, will you please to tell him so. I am so primed that I think I could write a great paper on the present state and future prospects of Turkey.

"He has been very agreeable, and with all his affectations—legion that they are—very amusing.

"Layard I don't like at all; he is the complete stamp to represent a (metropolitan) constituency—overbearing, loud, self-opinionated, and half-informed, if so much. Bulwer appeared to great advantage in his company.

"In my desire to see how far you were just or unjust to Georgina, I set to work to read over again the scenes she occurs in, and went from end to end of 'Tony Butler,' and at last came in despair to ask Julia to find her out for me! So much for the gift of constructiveness, and that power of con-

centration without which, Sir E. B. Lytton says, there is no success in fiction-writing."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 6, 1864.

"I have just received your cheques, and thank you much for your prompitude. You certainly 'know my necessities before I ask.'

"I cannot tell you the pleasure, the complete relief, it is to me to deal with a gentleman; and the cordial tone of our relations has done more for me than I thought anything *now* could, to rally and cheer me.

"I have been so long swimming with a stone round my neck, that I almost begin to wish I could go down and have it all over. You have rallied me out of this, and I frankly tell you it's your hearty God-speed has enabled me to make this last effort.

"Aytoun's 'Banting' is admirable. Mine is poor stuff after it: indeed, I'd not have done it if I'd thought he had it in hand. In one or two points we hit the same blot, but *his* blow is stronger and better than mine. Don't print me, therefore, if you don't like.

"Before this you will have received L. B., and I hope to hear from you about it. The address of this will show that my poor wife is no better, and that I cannot leave her.

"Gregory, the M.P. for Galway, is here, and it was meeting him suggested my hit at the lukewarm Conservatives. We fight every evening about

politics. I wish to Heaven I could have the floor of the House to do it on, and no heavier adversary to engage. . . .

"Henry Wolff is here full of great financial schemes,—director of Heaven knows what railroads, and secretary to an infinity of companies. He dined with me yesterday, and I'm sure I'd O'Dowd him. He means to pass the winter here. He pressed me hard about 'Tony,' and I lied like an envoy extracting a denial."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 9, 1864.

"All the railroads are smashed, and Spezzia is now, I understand, on an island, where I certainly shall not go to look for it. Here I am, therefore, till the floods subside.

"I knew you would like the O'Ds. I believe they are the best of the batch, but don't be afraid for 'Tony.' I have a fit of the gout on me that exactly keeps me up to the O'D. level; and I have one in my head for Father Ignatius that, if I only can write as I *see* it, will certainly hit. If Skeff is not brave it is no fault of mine. Why the devil did Wolff come and sit for his picture when I was just finishing the portrait from memory?

"The reason L. N. hated Dickson was: he (D——) was an awful skinflint, and disgusted all us 'youth,' who were rather jolly, and went the pace pretty briskly.

"D. is not the [?] of the Faculty man,

but a fellow who was once Professor of Botany (in Edinburgh, I think). He once made me a visit at my father's, but I never liked him.

"I must not O'D. L. N., because one day or other, if I live, I shall jot down some personal recollections of my own,—and, besides, I would not give in a way that might be deemed fictitious what I will declare as *fact*.

"If I can tone down M'C[askey] I will; but Skeff's courage is, I fear, incorrigible. Oh, Blackwood, it is 'not *I* that have made him, but *he* himself.' Not but he is a good creature, as good as any can be that has no *bone* in his *back*—the same malady that all the Bulwers have, for instance,—and, *take my word for it*, there is a large section of humanity that are not vertebrated animals. Ask Aytoun if he don't agree with me, and show *him* all this if you like; for though I never saw him, my instinct tells me I *know* him, and I feel we should hit it off together if we met."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 11, 1864.

"I have taken two days to think over Skeff's scene with M'C[askey], and do not think it overdrawn. M'C. is a ruffian, and I don't think you object to his being one; but you wish Skeff to show pluck. Now I remember (and it is only one instance out of many I could give you) Geo. Brotherton, one of the most dashing cavalry officers

in the service, coming to me to say that he had listened to such insolence about England from a Belgian sous-lieutenant that nearly killed him with rage. 'I had,' said he, 'the alternative of going out' (and probably with the sword too) 'with, not impossibly, the son of a costermonger—and who, *de facto*, was a complete *canaille*—or bear it,—and bear it I did, though it half choked me.'

"Skeff would have fought, time and place befitting; but he would not agree to *couper la gorge* at the prompt bidding of a professional throat-cutter, and I cannot impute cowardice to a man for that. Bear in mind, too (I have witnessed it more than once), the initiative in insult always overpowers a man that is opposed to it, if he be not by temperament and habit one of those ready-witted fellows who can at once see their way out of such a difficulty, as Col. O'Kelly, for instance, at the Prince's table—— You know the story; if not, I'll tell it to you.

"Still I am not wedded to my own judgment, and if I saw how to do it I'd change the tone of the scene; for when the thing strikes *you* so forcibly, and needs all this defence on *my* part, the presumption is it cannot be altogether right. I'll tell you, however, how I can show the reader that Skeff's mortification was properly felt by a subsequent admission—one line will do it—to Tony that he had gone through agonies on that same journey, and did not know if he should ever feel quite reconciled to his own endurance of M'Caskey's outrages.

"Will this do? If not, I'll rewrite it all for the volume.

"The floods have carried away the railroads here, — I wish to God they had swept off my creditors! That new way to pay old debts would have reconciled me to a month's rain. The idea of being washed clear of one's difficulties is ecstasy. Write to me—write to me!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 12, 1864.

"Mr O'Toole says, 'Now that I'm found out, I'll confess everything,' and I think so good a precept should not be lost. In fact, I think it is better to keep the disguise with respect to 'Tony' as long as I can, and I have thought of giving a mock name—my [grand]mother's, Arthur Helsham —in the title. I have been lying like a Turk for this year back, and I have really no face to own now that I wrote the book. Reason number two: there will be that other story of mine completed nearly at the same time, and you know better than myself how prone the world is to cry out, 'over-writing himself,' 'more rubbish,' &c. Thirdly: even they who discover me will be more generous to me in my mask (you know it's a Carnival rule never to kick a domino); and as for the outsiders, they'll say, 'This young author, with a certain resemblance to Mr Lever, but with a freshness and buoyancy which Mr Lever has long since taken leave of,' &c., &c., &c.

"Now so much for *my* notions; but *you* shall do exactly as you like, and what will, to your own thinking, be best for the book's success.

"God help Tony! If he doesn't marry the right woman it has been for no want of anxiety on my part: I have given him to each of them every alternate day and night for the last month. But it must be Dolly, unless he should take a sudden fancy for Mrs Maxwell. I'll send you the finale very soon, and you'll have time to say your say on it before it be irrevocable."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 13, 1864.

"On second thoughts I send you off the enclosed at once. One chap. more will finish 'Tony,' but I want to have your judgment on these before I write the last. I have worked nearly two nights through to do this. I am uncommonly anxious—more than I like to tell—that the book should be a success. I know well nothing will be wanting on *your part*, and I am all the more eager to do *mine*. Write to me as soon as you can, for I shall lie on my oars till I hear from you, except so far as correcting the volumes of T. and O'D.

"It has been, with all its fatigues, a great mercy to me to have had this hard work, for I have great—the greatest—anxieties around me, and but for the necessity for exertion, I don't think I could bear up."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 16, 1864.

"I have never quitted 'Tony' since I wrote to you, and here goes the result! I have finished him, unless you opine that a few more lines are needed, though what they ought to detail is not usually thought fit for publication.

"I hope to Heaven it is good. If you knew how I have laboured to fancy myself in a love-making mood,—if you knew by what drains on my *memory* —on my imagination—I have tried to believe a young damsel in my arms and endeavoured to make the sweet moment profitable,—you'd pity me. Perhaps a page of notices of what became of Maitland, M'Caskey, &c., is necessary, though I'm of the Irishman's opinion, 'that when we know Jimmy was hanged, we don't want to hear who got his corduroys.'

"Do you give me *your* opinion, however, and God grant it be favourable! for I'm dead-beat,—gouty, doubty, and damnably blue-devilled into the bargain."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 23, 1864.

"The Israelite whose letter you enclose seems to be without brains as well as 'guile.' Couldn't his stolid stupidity distinguish between a story thrown out as an 'illustration' and a 'fact'? Couldn't he see that the article was a paradox throughout, written merely to sustain the one grain of doubt that reformatories were not all that their advocates think them to be?

"On my oath, I believe that the British Public is the dreariest piece of 'bull-headed one-sidedness' that exists. He has added another sting to my gout that nothing short of kicking him would relieve me of. . . .

"Wolff is so much more absurd than stiff that I am ashamed of *my* man. His directorial-financial vein is about the broadest farce I know of, and all the while that he invents companies and devises share-lists, he has not that amount of arithmetic that can make up the score at whist!

"Labouchere is here now, and tortures the unlucky W. unceasingly.

"I hope you will sustain me in all my perjuries about 'Tony.' I told W. yesterday that *you* positively refused to tell me the author, and my own guess was that it was Mr Briggs, who was murdered."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, *Nov.* 26, 1864.

"I will certainly do the 'Directors.' Wolff will do for what artists call the 'lay figure,' and I'll put any drapery on him that I fancy.

"I think the loss of Lord Derby would be little short of the smash of the party—I mean, at this moment. Indeed his social position and his standing with the Queen were just as valuable to his friends as his great abilities, and to be led in the House of Lords by Lord Malmesbury is more than the party could stand.

"I remember once, when asked by Lord Lynd-

hurst what line I would suggest for a Conservative press—it was in '52—and I said, 'As much *sense*, my lord, as your party will bear.' 'That will do it. I understand, and I agree with you.'

"There was a project to give me the direction of the 'Herald,' 'Standard,' and 'St James's Chronicle' when purchased and in the hands of the Conservatives, and I believe it was about the sort of thing I could have done, because any good there is in me is for emergencies: I can hit them, and am seldom unprepared for them. Whatever takes the tone of daily *continuous* work and looks like industry I totally fail in.

"The project failed because I refused to accept a council of 'surveillance' that D'Israeli proposed, and indeed Lytton also recommended. Forgive all this egotistical balderdash; perhaps I think I am going to die, and want to leave my memoirs in a friend's hands.

"Your letters rally me, and I beg you to write often. If I wanted a boon from Fortune it would be to have wherewithal to live on (modestly), and write to my friends the sort of thing I write for the public, and give way to the fancies that I cannot or dare not make the public party to.

"I am curious for your critique on 'Tony.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 30, 1864.

"I think the enclosed few words are needed to round off 'Tony.' The characters of a book are to *my* mind damnably like the tiresome people who

keep you wishing them good-night till you wish them at the devil. They won't go,—the step of the hall door would seem to have bird-lime on it; and I therefore suspect that my constitutional impatience with the bores aforesaid has damaged many a book of mine.

"If you do not approve of the added bit, squash it; but it strikes me as useful.

"My poor wife laughed at your quiz at my bit of tenderness. She seldom laughs now, though once on a time the ring of merry laughing was heard amongst us from morn till night.

"Your cheque came all right; I have just checked my cook with it. We have a system of living here by what they call *Cottino*, which is really comfortable enough. You pay so much a-day to your cook for feeding you and your household, and he stipulates so many *plats*, &c., and it's *your* business to see that he treats you well. My rascal—a very good *artiste*—is a great politician, and everything that goes hard against the 'Left' (he is a great patriot) is revenged upon *me* in tough beef and raw mutton, but when Garibaldi triumphs, I am fed with pheasants and woodcocks."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Dec.* 9, 1864.

"Do you see how right I was in my 'O'Dowd' about Bismarck, and how now he is bullying the Diet and even Austria, and openly proclaiming how little thought there was of 'Germany' in

his Danish war? And yet I believe I am the sole proprietor and patentee of the opinion, and I have not yet heard even the faintest rumour of calling me to the Queen's counsels.

"My wife is half of Mrs Blackwood's opinion, and is in no good humour with Tony personally. She thinks he married out of 'sulk,' not for inclination; but you and I know better, and if ever Tony comes to live a winter in Florence, he'll find he made the best choice.

"I half think I have the opening of a good story for you, but I want to do something really creditable and will take time. Do you remember the Dutchman that took a race of three miles to jump over the ditch, and was so tired by the preparation that he sat down at the foot of it!

"I am low, low! but if I hear good accounts of 'Tony' and O'D. it will do me good service, and I know if *you* have them you'll not hide them.

"You will have got the end of 'Tony' by this, and I look to another letter from you to-morrow or next day.

"I meant 'Luttrell' for *you* when I began it, but 'Tony,' I think (*now*), is better; but I'll see if I can't beat both for a last spring before I lie down for aye."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Dec.* 11, 1864.

"Aytoun shall have the reversion of M'Caskey at his own price. I mean Aytoun's price, for the other estimate might be a stunner.

"Wolff—I mean Skeff—I mean to resuscitate,—that is, I think a droll paper of his unedited memoirs might one day be made amusing, and the vehicle for some very original notions on diplomacy and politics generally. He has just started to the Piræus to see Henry Bulwer, who, like Mr Mantalini, is at the point of death for the nineteenth time. Wolff looks up to him with immense reverence as being the most consummate rogue in Europe; and this he is certainly, notwithstanding the fact that he has been detected and pronounced a hardened offender by every Government since the Duke's to Palmerston's. What robbery he wants to entrust to W. with his dying breath is hard to say; but poor Skeffy is quite eager for the inheritance,—though God help him if he thinks he can rig the thimble when his pal has gone home."

To Mr John Blackwood.

[Undated.]

"They have sold my old house here, and I am driven to a little villa (or shall be) in about a month's time,—a small crib, nicely placed and very quiet, about a mile from the Gates.

"What fun one could make of the devil at Compiègne, talking over all L. Nap.'s plans, how he had humbugged every one—Pam, Russell, the Austrians, Emp., &c., &c.; the devil's compts. on the beauty of Paris, and how much all that luxury and splendour did for *him*. An evening with Bulwer, too, and a week at Pisa, where he

dined with H. Bulwer and heard the grand project for the regeneration of Turkey — the best bit of news the devil had heard since the partition of Poland.

"I would not for a great deal have called O'D. 'Corney' had I known of the other proprietor of the name; and I suspect I know the man, and that he is a right good fellow. Nobody, however, has copyright in his name — as *I* know, for a prebend of Lichfield wrote a socialist story and called his hero Charles Lever.

"I was once going to be shot by a certain Charles O'Malley, but who afterwards told all the adventures of my hero as his own, with various diversions into which I had not ventured.

"I was going to call O'D. 'Terence.' Now if the other O'D. likes to be rebaptised by that name I'm ready to stand godfather; but as my own child is before the world as Corney, I cannot change him."

XV.

FLORENCE AND SPEZZIA.

1865.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Jan.* 6, 1865.

"I HAVE just got your kind letter. I thank you for it heartily. The second instalment of 'Tony' and the 'O'Dowd' [paper] will be time enough in March.

"I am walking over the hills every day getting up my new tale; I truly think I have got on a good track.

"I'll send you a couple of short O'Ds. for February. When Parliament meets we shall not want for matter.

"I send one now on 'Tuft-hunting.' You will see I had Whately in my head while I was doing it.

"My hope and wish is to be able to begin a new story in the April No. Will this suit your book?

"You can't imagine how anxious I feel about 'Tony.' Let me hear from you how it is sub-

scribed? Mudie is, I think, the novel barometer; what says he? If the book is not known as mine, all the better. At least, I have such faith in my bad luck that I would rather any one else fathered it.

"If it were not for the cheer of your hearty letters I don't know what I should do, for I am low—low!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Jan.* 9, 1865.

"I send you herewith three O'Ds. 'Going into Parliament' — not bad; 'Excursionist,' perhaps tolerable,—but both true, so help me!

"This is the 9th, and if in time to let me have a proof—well. If not, I trust to you to see that my errors be set right and my sins forgiven me.

"One of the most curious trials — a case of disputed identity—is now going on in Madrid. I'd like to have given it, but I fear that the daily papers will have it, and of course we must never drink out of the same well. O'D. must be original or he is nothing, and the originality ought to be, if possible, in *matter* as much as manner. Don't you agree with me?

"I think I have a good opening of a story,—Ireland,—to be changed, scene ii., to Cagliari in Sardinia. It is only in my *head*, and in company there with duns, usurers, attorneys, begging letters, and F. O. impertinences,—my poor skull being like a pawnbroker's shop, where a great deal is 'pledged' and very little redeemable."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Jan.* 19, 1865.

"I got your note and your big cheque, and felt so lusty therewith that I actually contradicted my landlord, and conducted myself with a bumptiousness that half alarmed my family, unaware of the strong stimulant I was under.

"Hech, sirs! aren't I nervous about 'Tony'? You made a great mistake in not putting a name on the title. It will be ascribed to me, and blackguarded in consequence.

"I am glad you like the O'D. on 'Tuft-hunting.' Of course you saw I had Whately and his tail in my eye. They were the most shameless dogs I ever forgathered with.

"Do let me hear from you about T. B. soon. You may depend on't that Corney O'Dowd's sins will be visited on Tony, and the fellows who would not dare to come out into the open and have a 'fall' with Tony will shy their stone at him now.

"Why have you not reprinted in a vol. the 'Maxims of Morgan O'Doherty'? They are unequalled in their way.

"By this you will have received the O'D. on 'Wolff going into Parliament' and a score more *sui generis.*

"I have composed three openings of the new story, and nearly driven my family distracted by my changes of plan; but I am not on the right road yet. However, I hope to be hard at it next week.

"Is the 'P. M. Gazette' to be the organ of the

Party or is it a private spec? When I only think of the Tories of my acquaintance it is not any surprise to me that the Party is not a power; though I certainly feel if they were there and not kicked out again it would go far to prove a miracle. Are these your experiences?"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Jan.* 24, 1865.

"You are such a good fellow that you can give even bad news a colour of comfort; but it *is* bad news, this of 'Tony,' and has caught me like a strong blow between the eyes. Surely in this *gurgite vasto* of [ ] and sensuality there ought to be some hearing for a man who would give his experiences of life uncharged with exaggerations, or unspiced by capital offences.

"I am sure a notice of 'The Times,' if it could be, would get the book a fair trial, and I neither ask nor have a right to more. Meanwhile I am what Mrs O'Dowd calls 'several degrees below Nero.'

"I began my new story yesterday, but I'll wait till I hear more cheery news before I take to my (ink) bottle again.

"You'll have to look sharp for blunders in the last O'D.

"It almost puts me in spirits to talk of the theatricals. It is my veritable passion, and I plume myself upon my actorship. I have had plays in nearly every house I have lived in, in all parts of Europe. Mary Boyle — that was

Dickens's *prima donna*—was of my training; her infant steps (she was five-and-thirty at the time) were first led by me; and I remember holding a ladder for her while she sang a love-song out of a window, and (trying to study my own part at the same time) I set fire to her petticoats!

"There are short things from the French which would do well if your people had time to translate them. 'Les Inconsolables,' from two really good artists, first-rate. I have a little Italian piece by me would also adapt well, and it is an immense gain to have a piece perfectly new and fresh, and when there can be no odious comparisons with Buckstone or Keely, and the rest of them. In fact, half of our young English amateurs are only bad Robsons and Paul Bedfords. My girls are all good actresses, and we have—or we used to have—short scenes of our devising constantly got up amongst us.

"Remember to send me good news, true or not, or at least any civil 'notice' you may see of 'Tony,' for till I hear again 'the divil a word ever I write.'

"When I read out your letter this morning, my wife said in a whisper, 'Now he'll be off to whist worse than ever!' So it is; I take to the rubber as other men do to a dram.

"Have you sent copies of T. B. to the press folk? I don't know if Savage has to do with 'The Examiner,' but he is an old pal of mine, and would willingly give us a lift.

"I wish I had Bright's speech in time for a

quiz this month. It was a rare occasion. A mock classic oration, for a tribune of the people, full of gross flattery of the Plebs, would have been good fun; but [? the opportunity] is everything, and the joke that comes late looks, at least, as if it took labour to arrive at.

"Oh dear, but I am down! down! Write to me, I entreat you.

"Give my heartiest good wishes to the Corps Dramatique,—say that I am with them in spirit. 'My heart's in the side scenes, my heart is not here.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Feb.* 4, 1865.

"I am impatient to show you a brick of the new house: first, because if you don't like it I'll not go on; and secondly, if you should think well of it, your encouragement will be a great strengthener to me, and give me that confidence that none of my own connections ever inspire. My womenkind like Sir F., partly perhaps because I have said something about my 'intentions.' Not that I have any intentions, however, so fixed that the course of the story may not serve to unhinge them. At all events, *you* are well able to predicate from a molar tooth what sort of a beast it was that owned it, or might own it. Say your say then, and as boldly as our interests require.

"I'd like to write you the best story in my market—that is, if I have a market; but now and then I half feel as if I were only manufacturing

out of old wearables, like the devil's dust folk at Manchester.

"I have no heart to talk of 'Tony,' because I think the book is a deal better than what the scoundrels are daily praising, and I know there is better 'talk' in it than the rascals ever did talk or listen to in the dirty daily Covent Garden lines. There's a burst of indignant vanity for you, and I'm 'better for it' already. If 'The Times' had noticed us at once, it would have given the key-note; but *patienzia*, as the Italians say.

"Now let me have a line at your earliest about B. F., for though we don't start till All Fools' Day, I'd like to get in advance. I hope you'll like the O'Ds. I sent last. When vol. ii. is ready let me have one by post. Your cheque is come all safe —my thanks for it.

"We are in great commotion here; the K. has arrived. Turin being in a state that may be any moment 'of siege,' things look very ill here, and the men in power are quite unequal to the charge."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Florence, *Feb.* 11, 1865.

"You are wrong about the scandal — there is none abroad whatever! For the same reason that Lycurgus said there was no adultery in Sparta, because every one had a legal right to every one else. There can be no criticism where there is no default.

"'The Times' on 'Tony' was miserable: the book is — 'though I that oughtn't,' &c., — good. That is, there is a devilish deal more good in it

than half of the things that are puffed up into celebrity, and had it been written by any man but my unlucky self, would have had great success. I have not seen the M. P. notice. I have just seen the 'P. Mall Gazette.' It is deplorably bad: the attempts at fun and smartness positively painful. I am impatient to hear what you say of the new story."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Feb.* 21, 1865.

"I hasten to answer your note, which has just come and relieved me of some gloomy apprehensions. I had begun to fancy that your delay in pronouncing on B. F. is out of dislike to say that you are not pleased with it. This fear of mine was increased by being low and depressed. Your judgment has relieved me, however, and done me much good already, and to-morrow I'll go to work 'with a will' and, I hope, a 'way.'

"'The Judge and his Wife'[1] are life sketches, the rest are fictional.

"I send you a batch of O'Ds. for April No.

[1] Baron Lendrick (in 'Sir Brook Fossbrooke') was one of Lever's favourite characters. The old judge was a sketch for which he had to depend upon a memory of a journey made more than twenty years before 'Sir Brook' was written. Lever had travelled to London in the 'Forties with a distinguished party—Isaac Butt, Frederick Shaw (the member for Dublin University), Henry West (afterwards a judge), and Sergeant Lefroy (afterwards Lord Chief-Justice of Ireland). Baron Lendrick was a study of Lefroy. It was said that Lever was the only man who had ever succeeded in making Lefroy laugh. Lever declared that his Baron Lendrick was a portrait upon which he had expended "a good deal of time and paint."—E. D.

Some of them I think good. By the way, Smith —of Smith & Elder—has been begging me to send him something, as O'Ds. I refused, and said that Cornelius was your property, and if I sent him an occasional squib it should be on no account under that title.

"From what I have seen I agree with you about the style and pretensions of the 'P. M. Gazette.' They are heavy when trying to be light and volatile, the dreariest sort of failure imaginable. It is strange fact that what the world regards as the inferior organisation — the temperament for drollery—is infinitely the most difficult to imitate. Your clown might possibly play Hamlet. I'll be shot if Hamlet could play Clown! Now original matter on daily events, to be read at all, ought to have the stamp of originality on its style. These fellows have not caught this. They are as tiresome as real members of Parliament.

"There is a great dearth of 'passing topics' for O'Dowderie; Parliament is dull, and society duller. I am sure that a little stupidity—a sort of prosy platitude just now in O'D.—would conciliate my critics of the press. My pickles have given them a heartburn, d—— them; but they shall have them hotter than ever."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*Feb.* 29, 1865.

"I have just got your note and its 'farce': thanks for both. 'Tony Butler' is a deal too good for the stupid public, who cram themselves

with [ ] and [ ], which any one with a Newgate Calendar at hand and an unblushing temperament might accomplish after a few easy lessons.

"It is very little short of an indignity for a man to write for a public who can gloat over [ ] or the stupid drolleries of [ ], so flauntingly proclaimed by 'The Times,' as most utter trash. I am decidedly sick of my readers and my critics, and not in any extravagance of self-conceit, because though I know I have a speciality for the thing I do, I neither want any one to believe it a high order of performance or myself a very great artist. I only say it is mine, and that another has not done it in the same way.

"I shall be sorry if you omit the O'Ds. this month. Two of them, at least, are apropos, and would suffer. The careful meditation, too, is worth something, as I claim to be ready with my pen, even when I only wound my bird."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *March* 7, 1865.

"I answer your note at once to acknowledge your cheque. It's not necessary to tell you how I value your feeling for me, or how deeply I prize your treatment of me. Sorely as I feel the public neglect of 'Tony,' I declare I am more grieved on your account than on my own. It is in no puppyism I profess to think the book good: faults I know there are, scores of them, but there is more know-

ledge of men and women and better 'talk' in it, I honestly believe, than in those things which are run after and third-editioned. As to doing better—I frankly own I cannot. It is not *in* me. I will not say I may not hit off my public better, though I'm not too confident of even *that*, but as to writing better, throwing off more original sketches of character,—better contrasts in colour or *sharper* talkers,—don't believe it! I cannot.

"A more *ignorant* notice than the 'Saturday Review' I never read. M'Caskey is no more an anachronism than myself! though perhaps the writer of the paper would say that is not taking a very strong ground.

"Why don't you like the 'Rope Trick'? It is better than most of the O'Ds. By the way, Smith only *asked* if I would send him O'Dowderies, and I misrepresented him if I conveyed anything stronger. I was not sorry, however, at the opportunity it gave me to say—how much and how strongly—I felt that they were *yours* so long as you cared for them. You had been the godfather when they were christened.

"I am half disappointed we don't start B. F. next month; but you are always right,—perhaps even *that* makes the thing harder to bear.

"'Piccadilly' is very good, very amusing; one thing is pre-eminently clear, the writer is distinctively a 'gentleman.' None but a man hourly conversant with good society could give the tone he has given to Salon Life. It has the perfume of the drawing-room throughout it all, and if any one

thinks that an easy thing to do, let him try it—that's all.

"What you say of 'Our Mutual Friend' I agree with thoroughly. It is very disagreeable reading, and the characters are more or less repugnant and repelling; but there are bits, one especially, in the last No., of restoring a drowned fellow to life which no man living but Dickens could have written. I only quote 'Armadale' for the sake of the Dream Theory: it is an odious story to my thinking, and I never can separate the two cousins in my head, and make an infernal confusion in consequence. How good 'Miss Marjoribanks' is—how excellent! What intense humour, what real knowledge of human nature! To my thinking she has no equal, and so think all my womanhood, who prefer her to all the story-writers, male and female.

"What you hint about a real love-story is good, but don't forget that Thackeray said, 'No old man must prate about love.' I remember the D. of Wellington once saying to me, referring to Warren's 'Ten Thousand a-Year': 'It is not that *he never had* ten thousand a-year, but he never knew a man who had.' As to writing about love from memory, it's like counting over the bank-notes of a bank long broken. They remind you of money, it's true, but they're only waste-paper after all."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *March* 11, 1865.

"I send off by book-post the O'D. proof, though I suppose, and indeed hope, you will not use them

for the April No., but keep them for May. This, not alone because it will give me more time to think of 'Sir B.,' but also, because there is just now rather a dearth of matter for what the 'Morning Post' describes as my 'Olympian platitudes.'

"'Oh dear, what a trial it is—to be kicked by a cripple.'

"I have added a few lines to complete the 'Church' O'Dowd; pray see that it is correct. I am curious to see the new vol., and to hear from you about its success.

"Do write to me—and as often as you have spare time. If we ever meet, I'll pay it all back in *talk*."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Croce di Malta, Spezzia,
March (*St Pat.'s Day*).

"Gout, a rickety table, and four stupid Piedmontese authorities talking bad Italian and smoking 'Cavours' at my side, are not aids to polite letter-writing, and so forgive me if unusually incoherent and inexplicable.

"I came hurriedly down here to be consular, and to see poor old Mrs Somerville, who was very seriously ill. She has rallied, but it is the rally of eighty odd years. Nothing short of a Scotchwoman could have lived through her attack.

"On looking over the 'Whist' proof, there are a few changes I would suggest. I would, for instance, insert the 7 pp. copy in place of the

piece marked (—). It will need your careful supervision and reading. The other bit of a page and half copy I would insert at p. 4, after the word 'frankness.' The concluding sentence is in its due place. These bits are meant to take off the air of didactic assumption the article is tinged with, and also to dispose the reader to think I am not perfectly serious in esteeming Whist to be higher than Astronomy or the Physical Sciences.

"I have shown 'Foss' to a *very* critical fellow here, and he says it is better in *manner* than 'Tony.' I don't believe him, though I should like to do so.

"You shall have the proof at once. My daughter writes me that O'D. 2 has arrived and looks very nice. Tell me how subscribed! Tell me what said of it!

"Is it true you are all in a devil of a funk at a war with America? So say the diplomats here, but they are very generally mistaken about everything except 'Quarter day.' I had Hudson to dinner on Monday, and we laughed ourselves into the gout, and had to finish the evening with hot flannels and colchicum. There is not his equal in Europe. If I could only give you his talk, you'd have such a *Noctes* as I have never read of for many a year, I assure you. I wished for you when the fun was going fast. Good Heavens! how provoking it is that such a fellow should not be commemorated. Listening to him after reading a biography is such rank bathos; and as to

settling down to *write* after him, it is like setting to work to brew small beer with one's head swimming with champagne. I hope to be back at Villa Morelli by Sunday, and to find a proof and a letter from you when I arrive.

"I shall be very glad to see Mr M. Skene when he turns up at Florence. I need not tell you that a friend of yours comes into the category of the favoured nations. My life is now, however, a very dull affair to ask any one to look at, and it is only by a real feeling of good-nature any one would endure me.

"Only think of this climate! I have had to close the jalousies to keep out the sun, and it is now positively too hot where I am writing. I could almost forgive the 'Excursionists' coming out to bask in such sunshine.

"I hear the 'M. Post' has had a long and favourable notice of 'Tony.' Have you seen it?

"Now be sure you write to me and often. *Addio.*

"The American consul has just called and told me that his Government are sending a smashing squadron over here under an admiral—a sort of 'Io Triumphe' after the raising of the blockade. All the big frigates are to be included in it."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *March* 30, 1865.

"This is only to say how much your criticism on 'Sir B.' has pleased me, but don't believe the book

is better than 'Tony'—it is not. The man who wrote the other hasn't as good in his wallet.

"I am *sure* the *Major* is right, and the story of being *chasséd* from Austria reads wrong; but it is not, as one might imagine, *unfounded.* The case was Yelverton's, and present V. Admiral in the Mediterranean, and the lady an Infanta of Portugal, and it went so far that she was actually going off with him. Now, if you still think it should be cancelled, be it so. I have only recommended it to mercy, not pardoned it.

"Besides my gout I am in the midst of worries. The New Capital is playing the devil with us in increased cost of everything, and my landlord—the one honest man I used to think him in the Peninsula—has just written to apprise me that my rent is doubled. Of course I must go, but where to? that's the question. I'd cut my lucky and make towards England, but that our friends at the Carlton say, 'Hold on to Spezzia and we'll give you something when we come in.' Do you remember the German Duke who told his ragged followers they should all have shirts, for he was about to sow flax? I threw my sorrows into a doggerel epigram as I was in my bath this morning.—

"To such a pass have things now come,
So high have prices risen,
If Italy don't go to Rome,
Then—I must go to prison.

"I find that Skene and I are old friends who have fought many a whist battle together. I

wanted him to dine with me yesterday to meet Knatchbull and Labouchere, but he was lumbagoed and obliged to keep his bed: he is all right to-day, however.

"I hope to have a few days (a week) in England this spring—that is, if I keep out of jail,—but I'll let you know my plans when they are planned.

"I have not written since — better I should not—for I go about saying to myself 'D—— Morelli,' so that my family begin to tremble for my sanity."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Spezzia, *April* 6, 1865.

"Your letter has just caught me here. I came down hurriedly to see if I couldn't find a 'location,' for my Florentine landlord — actuated by those pure patriotic motives which see in the change of capital the greatness of Italy and the gain of Tuscany—has put 280 odd l. on my rent! As I have been stupid enough to spend some little money in improving my garden, &c., he is wise enough to calculate that I feel reluctant to leave where I have taken root.

"These are small worries, but *they are* worries in their way, and sometimes more than mere worries to a man like myself who takes a considerable time to settle down, and hates being disturbed afterwards. It never was a matter of surprise to me that story of the prisoner who, after twenty year's confinement, refused to accept

his liberty! And for this reason: if I had been a Papist I'd never have spent a farthing to get me out of Purgatory, for I know I'd have taken to the place after a while, and made myself a sort of life that would have been very endurable.

"You will see from this that 'Sir B.' is not advancing. How can he, when I am badgered about from post to pillar? But once settled, you'll see how I'll work. It's time I should say I had your cheque all right; and as to 'Sir B.,' it shall be all as you say.

"I am sorely put out by 'Tony' not doing better. I can understand scores of people not caring for O'Dowd, just as I have heard in Society such talk as O'D. voted a bore. Englishmen resent a smartness as a liberty: the man who tries a jest in their company has been guilty of a freedom not pardonable. But surely 'Tony' is as good trash as the other trash vendors are selling; his nonsense is as readable nonsense as theirs. I am not hopeful of hitting it off better this time, though I have a glimmering suspicion that 'Sir Brooke' will be bad enough to succeed.

"Skene and Preston came out to me one evening. I wish I had seen more of them. We laughed a good deal, though I was depressed and out of sorts.

"Of course if Hudson goes 'yourwards' I'll make him known to you. What a misfortune for all who love the best order of fun that he was not poor enough to be obliged to write for his bread! His letters are better drollery than any of us can do,

and full of caricature illustrations far and away beyond the best things in 'Punch.' Who knows but one of these days we may meet at the same mahogany; and if we should——

"I forget if I told you I have a prospect of a few days in town towards the beginning of May—my positively last appearance in England, before I enter upon that long engagement in the great afterpiece where there are no Tony Butlers nor any O'Dowds.

"I do hope I shall see you: no fault of mine will it be if I fail."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *April* 10, 1865.

"Send for No. 1 of 'The Excursionist,' edited by a Mr Cook, and if you don't laugh, 'you're no' the man I thought ye.' He pitches in to me most furiously for my O'Dowd on the 'Convict Tourists'; and seeing the tone of his paper, I only wonder he did not make the case actionable.

"He evidently believes that I saw him and his 'drove Bulls,' and takes the whole in the most serious light. Good Heavens! what a public he represents.

"The extracts he gives from the T. B.'s article are far more *really* severe than anything I wrote, because the snob who wrote them was a *bonâ fide* witness of the atrocious snobs around him; and as for the tourist who asks, 'Is this suit of clothes good enough for Florence, Mr Cook?' I could make a book on him.

"The fellow is frantic, that is clear.

"Heaven grant that I may fall in with his tourists! I'll certainly go and dine at any *table d'hôte* I find them at in Florence.

"I have been so put out (because my landlord will insist on putting me out) by change of house that I have not been able to write a line."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *April* 14, 1865.

"After the affecting picture Skene drew of you over one of my inscrutable MSS., I set the governess to work to copy out a chapter of 'Sir B.,' which I now send; the remainder of the No. for July I shall despatch to-morrow or next day at farthest. That done, I shall rest and do no more for a little while, as my story needs digestion.

"I have asked for a short leave. I am not sure the answer may not be, 'You are never at your post, and your request is mere surplusage, and nobody knows or cares where you are,' &c. If, however, 'My Lord' should not have read 'The Rope Trick,' and if he should be courteously disposed to accord me my few weeks of absence, and if I should go,—it will be at once, as I am anxious to be in town when the world of Parliament is there, when there are men to talk to and to listen to. I want greatly to see you: I'm not sure that it is not one of my primest objects in my journey.

"All this, however, must depend on F. O., which, to say truth, owes me very little favour

or civility. I have been idle latterly—not from choice indeed; but my wife has been very poorly, and there is nothing so entirely and hopelessly disables me as a sick house: the very silence appals me."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, *April* 23, 1865.

"I send you a short story. I have made it O'Dowdish, but you shall yourself decide if it would be better unconnected with O'D. It would not make a bad farce; and Buckstone as 'Joel,' and Paul Bedford as 'Victor Emanuel,' would make what the Cockneys call a 'screamer.'

"I have not yet heard anything of my leave, but if I get it at once, and *am forced to utilise it immediately*, my plan would be to go over to Ireland (where I am obliged to go on business), finish all I have to do there, and be back by the 20th to meet you in London. I cannot say how delighted I should be to go down to you in Scotland. I'd like to see you with your natural background,—a man is always best with his own accessories,—but it mauna be. I can't manage the time. Going, as I do, from home with my poor wife such a sufferer is very anxious work, and though I have deferred it for the last five years, I go now—if I do go—with great fear and uneasiness. It requires no small self-restraint to say 'No' to so pleasant a project, and for God's sake don't try and tempt me any more!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *May* 6, 1865.

"I suppose (from your silence) that you imagine me in, or about to be in, England. But no; thanks to 'The Rope Trick,' perhaps, my Lord has not vouchsafed any reply to my asking for leave, and here I am still. It is the more provoking because, in the expectation of a start, I idled the last ten days, and now find it hard to take up my bed and walk, uncured by the vagabondage I looked for.

"Besides this, I had received a very warm and pressing invitation to I know not what celebrations in Ireland, and meant to have been there by the opening of the Exhibition. However, the F. O. won't have it, and here I am.

"I am deucedly disposed to throw up my tuppenny consulate on every ground, but have not the pluck, from really a want of confidence in myself, and what I may *be* this day twelve months, if I *be* at all.

"Write to me at all events, and with proof, since if 'the leave' does not arrive to-morrow or next day, I'll not avail myself of it.

"If I could hear O'D. was doing flourishing I'd pitch F. O. to the devil by return of post."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *May* 10, 1865.

"When this comes to hand I hope to be nearer you than I am now. My address will be care of Alexander Spencer, Esq., 32 North Frederick

Street, Dublin. Any proofs — and I hope for some—will find me there.

"F. O. meant to bully, and *did* bully me; but, after all, one must say that there is an impression that I wrote 'Tony Butler,' and as I am indolent to contradict it, *que voulez-vous?* I only got my blessed leave to-day, and go to-morrow. Never feeling sure that I should be able to go, I have left everything to the last, and now I am overwhelmed with things to do.

"My stay in Ireland will be probably a week, and I hope to be in London by the end of the month. Let me know your plans and your places.

"I am a (something) at the Irish Exhibition (remind me to tell you a story of the D. of Richmond at Rotterdam, which won't do to write); and perhaps it would not be seemly to O'Dowd the Dubliners."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Morrison's, Dublin, *May* 21, 1865.

"My movements are to go up to London by Wednesday next. I have a fortnight at least to give to London, but don't mulct any engagements on my account, but let me see you on your 'off days.'

"I sent off the 'Hero-worship,' corrected, by yesterday's mail, but added in the envelope a prayer to whomever it might concern not to trust to my hasty revisal, but to look to the orthographies closely, and especially to make Mr Jack 'Mr Joel,' as he ought to be.

"Heaven reward you for sending me money! I wonder how you knew I lost £40 last Wednesday night at whist at a mess. I shall, I hope, have wherewithal to pass me on to my parish, but no more.

"The Exhibition here is really good, and very tasteful and pretty. The weather is, however, atrocious, and I am half choked with a cold.

"A Scotch friend, J. F. Drummond (some relative of George Thompson's), has been endeavouring to have me domiciled at the house he stops at, 11 St James's Place; but I suspect that the coming Derby has made a difficulty, and I shall probably not get in: hitherto I have always gone to the Burlington, but a notion of 'Thrift' (*vide* O'Dowd) impels me to do something that I already suspect will end in a reckless extravagance."

Lever found Dublin bright, lively, and hospitable, and he was soon ready to cry out against the killing effects of too much dining, too much whist, and too much flattery. Some of his Irish friends noticed that he suffered from occasional attacks of utter despondency. The novelist himself explains the cause of his low-spiritedness: many of his blithesome companions of the 'Thirties and 'Forties were dead, and most of those who remained in the land of the living had become very old and painfully prim. When he paid a visit to the Four Courts, he saw on the bench solemn care-worn personages whom he had known as struggling and light-hearted lawyers. His

sympathies almost to the last were with young and lively folk: old age was his bogey. "I like the ambitions of young men," he said, "their high and their bold self-confidence, which no man retains when he gets 'groggy.'"

Amongst his entertainers in Dublin during this visit were Sheridan Le Fanu, W. H. Lecky, and Sir William Wilde. The first two of these noted Lever's dulness: Wilde found him more brilliant than ever. The novelist's moods were peculiarly variable just then. Amongst the visits he paid to old haunts was one to the place where his Burschen Club had held revel thirty-five years previously. He discovered some of the club's paraphernalia, and obtained possession of these relics of golden hours.

When he visited Trinity College he was a prey to conflicting emotions, but on the whole the remembrances of the old days, when he lived at No. 2 Botany Bay, were pleasant and inspiriting. He declares that as he walked through the courts and corridors of the University he felt as if thirty years of hard conflict with the world were no more than a memory, and that he was as ready as ever to fling himself headlong into all the fun and frolic of a freshman's life.

This highly-strung mood was succeeded by a fit of deepest melancholy. As he said good-bye to Trinity he felt that he was gazing upon it for the last time. He had submitted to the ordeal of being photographed. The result did not tend to chase his gloom away. The photograph showed

him features which the hand of Time had coarsened.

In London he met, for the first time, John Blackwood. It was a merry meeting. Blackwood, writing from The Burlington on June 4th, says: "This place is in a greater whirl than ever, and it is with the greatest difficulty I can get anything done. In addition to the usual distractions, I have had Cornelius O'Dowd staying in the same house. He is a sort of fellow that comes into your room and keeps you roaring with laughter for a couple of hours every hour of the day. . . . His fun is something wonderful." Every likely attraction was provided for O'Dowd by his publisher. Hannay, Kinglake, Delane did their best to entertain him. Blackwood describes the contrast between Kinglake and Lever,—the former making neat little remarks, and Lever rattling on with story after story. Harry Lorrequer appeared in the Park, riding on a nag of Lord Bolingbroke's. Blackwood humorously declares that, seeing a donkey-cart in Piccadilly, he was uneasy lest the author of 'Charles O'Malley' should be tempted to clear the cart in a flying leap.

The novelist's own impressions of this visit to London were sufficiently lively. He was entertained by Lord Houghton, Lord Lytton, and other literary big-wigs. The city seemed as new to him—"just as noisy, as confounding, as addling, as exciting, as tantalising, as never satisfying"—as when he had first seen it. London loungers, he said, had no idea of the overwhelming excite-

ment produced on an idle Anglo-Italian by the mere sounds and sights of the streets, nor could they measure the confusion and enjoyment experienced by a man "who hears more in half an hour than he has imagined in half a year."

He returned to Florence in June, visiting Paris on the homeward journey. He was not sorry to find that official duties called him to Spezzia. He was anxious for a period of rumination—for an easy opportunity of sliding back into the routine ways of pen-craft, which were, he declares, the labour and the happiness of his life. For some weeks consular work kept him busy, and it was difficult to make much headway with 'Sir Brook.' Moreover, he was beginning to suffer from attacks of somnolency, akin to the attacks which had prostrated him at Templeogue. When he was not sleeping he was frequently enwrapped in a half dream. "I reflect much," he said, "and always with my eyes closed and a pillow under my head, and with such a semblance of perfect repose that calumnious people have said I was asleep. These hours of reflection occupy a large share of the forenoon and of the time between early dinner and sunset. They are periods of great enjoyment: they once were even more so, when an opinion prevailed that it would be a sacrilege to disturb me, these being the creative hours of my active intelligence. This faith has long since changed for a less reverent version of my labours, and people are less scrupulous about interruption." One cannot help suspecting that opium played some part

in this languorousness,—though there is no evidence that he resumed the habit.

It would have been impossible that Lever should allow even his slumber-fits to escape from association with some form of frolic. Attired in a negligently-worn linen suit, he fell asleep on a chair one day at the public baths. An English footman came into the place, and, mistaking the vice-consul for an attendant, he rudely shook him and declared that he wanted a bath instantly. "There you are!" said Lever, springing to his feet, seizing the flashily-dressed lackey, and pitching him into the reservoir.

To Dr Burbidge.

"VILLA MORELLI, *July* 1, 1865.

"I am much obliged by your interest for me at Valetta. I really *want* the house, first, because I would be glad to get away from Florentine dearness; and secondly, I ought to give up Spezzia or go to it. If, then, anything can be done anent this matter, it will serve me much.

"Of course I am sorry to hear that you should leave Spezzia, but I cannot but feel the bishop's offer a good one—good as the means of securing an excellent position and field for further effort. To me Malta would be very palatable. I like the 49th, and their stupid talk. I like pipeclay, and facings, and camp gossip. I like the Mess, and the half-crown whist, and the no 'canon' company.

"*You* are above all this, and *tant pis* for you. It is a grand lesson in life to have habits and ways

that will suit the lowest rate of intelligence; and as for me, I have not a pursuit that could not be practised by the company of a private madhouse.

"I have seen a review of 'Tony,' excellent in its way, and giving some encouragement to the 'evidently young author,' and warning him that his Italian politics are too heavy for fiction.

"I have begun a new story, 'Sir Brook Fossbrooke.' What it will turn out, God knows. 'Luttrell' is complete and out, and another vol. of 'O'Dowd' appears next week.

"There is a new evening paper (Tory) called 'The Pall Mall Gazette' started. They have asked me to join them, but I don't like newspaper work, and have said 'No.'

"Till 'the party' are able to strike out some line essentially different from Palmerston's, not merely crotchety, but really distinctive, all advocating of them in the press is impossible. Now, it's hard work to *read* platitudes; it's the devil to *write* them. Hannay is to be the editor."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Hôtel de Milan, Spezzia, *July* 11, 1865.

"I have just got your note and the proof of O'D. in the midst of my consular cares, with my Jack flying out of my consular windows, and my consular brains broiling under a temperature that would roast a woodcock.

"I sent you off Sir B. in proof by this post. 'O'Dowd' shall follow (if possible) to-morrow, at all events in time. For the love of God, let some

man learned in orthographies look to my proofs, for I can't spell after the thermometer passes 90° in the shade, and if I were to be d——d I don't know how many *d*'s there are in granddaughter.

"As to writing here I need only say that it costs me a small apoplexy to perform the present note. The railroad screams under my window, and two Miss Somervilles are sol-faing overhead (and I vow to Heaven I like the locomotive best), and I have a telegram to say that the admiral may be here any day after the 17th, and stay as long as he finds it pleasant,—a condition which (if I know myself) will not entail any undue delay."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Hôtel de Milan, Spezzia, *July* 13, 1865.

"Your note came on here to-day, the enclosure stayed at Florence. What cruel inspiration suggested your thoughtful kindness? I left home declaring that I was ruined, had overdrawn you, and had not a *sou* for anything; that we must live on roots and drink water till next spring: and now my beautiful budget, that I have just carried at the risk of the Government, is all gone and smashed.

"You (fortunately for you) don't know that all these things are very great things to people who are always swimming for their lives,—but enough of it.

"I have been exceedingly busy since I came here. An order of the Queen's Bench named me a Commissioner to take evidence in a case coming

on for trial next November, and I have been sitting up—like a Brummagem Chief-Justice—and rebuking witnesses, and scowling at the public like a real judge.

"I send a few lines to complete O'D. for the month. How I wrote them I don't know, for this infernal place is so noisy, and the interruptions so frequent, I'd fain be back in Brook Street for quiet.

"I fear I shall be detained here all this month, for the admiral is on his way here, and the whole Maltese fleet are thirsting for bitter beer and champagne. I wonder if I were to put down their powers of suction in my extraordinaries would F. O. stand it?"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Hôtel de Milan, Spezzia, *July* 15, 1865.

"I send off O'D. proof to-night. I last night sent by private hand some pages to conclude it. Do look very carefully to both; my orthography (like Acre's courage) oozes out of my finger-ends in this hot weather.

"I have had a two hours' swim, and am so sleepy and 'water-logged' that I can't write, though I'm dying to O'Dowd the judge for his remarks on Dr Paterson in the Pritchard case. They are so ignorant, and so vulgar to boot.

"If every doctor who *suspected* foul play in the treatment of malady was to cry out Murder! the whole world would be one wild shout of assassination. What between medical timidity, terror, *gobemoucherie*, and sometimes private malice, the

police-courts would have enough on their hands. They say railroads must have no signals because pusillanimous travellers would be eternally summoning the guard, and here is exactly a similar evil with worse consequences.

"I don't think I ever conversed with a country practitioner who hadn't a story or two of 'foul play,' and so palpably untrue as to be laughable. In all probability Paterson's impressions were only strong when he found the woman had died, and it is a very medical error to imagine a skill in prediction which only comes after the event. The world is all subserviency to the doctor when there is an epidemic abroad, and 'takes it out' in insult when the weather is fine and the season salubrious.

"'The Spanish fleet' is not in sight.

"Remember I rely upon you to look closely to these last 'Sir Bs.' and 'O'Dowds,' for I am as near softening of the brain as it is permitted to a consul to be."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Hôtel de Milan, Spezzia, *July* 28, 1865.

"It seems like a century to me since we heard of each other. Here I am still awaiting the fleet. They were to come on the 27th, and they are to be here positively on the 6th, most positively on the 8th, and as sure as the Lord liveth (I mean the First Lord), on the 12th August.

"I have my youngest daughter with me, who keeps me in a perpetual round of croquet, picnics, boat-races, and moonlight rowing-parties.

"If you knew, then, the difficulty I have had to write the two chaps. I now send you (my first instalment of Sept. 'Fossbrooke'), you would prize them more certainly than their merit could call for."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"Hôtel de Milan, Spezzia, *Aug.* 6, 1865.

"I got your telegram just as I was starting for a picnic, to eat my lobster afterwards with what appetite I might. I suspect (it is mere suspicion) that chap. i., enclosed in an envelope I had borrowed from an American colleague, has gone (through the words 'U.S. Consulate' on the corner) to America, and that Sir B. F. is now making the tour of 'the Union.'

"Rewriting is all very fine; but I have forgotten all I wrote, as I always do, or I should go mad. If Providence had only inflicted me with a memory in proportion to my imagination, I'd have been in Bedlam twenty years ago. I have therefore set to work and written something else. If the other turns up, you may prefer it ('You pays your money and takes your choice,' as the apple-women say).

"God forgive me, but I grow less wise as I grow older. The old smack of devil-may-care, that sat so easily on me as a boy, keeps dodging me now in grey hairs and making a fool of me; but you've read the German story of the fellow whose wooden leg was 'possessed' and ran away with him. I haven't a wooden leg, but I have a wooden stick that plays a like prank with me.

"O'Dowd indeed! And *I* flirting with little Yankee girls, and teaching them to swim! Don't talk to *me* of O'Dowd!

"Tell your uncle to send me whatever there remains of balance of the last O'Ds., for I am losing my money here like fun, and ashamed to send to my bankers for more.

"Continue to address me *here:* I see no prospect of my getting back to Florence. The English fleet is still at Rosas, and the three balls we intended to give them have already come off here, and we are all ruined in champagne and crinoline before the honoured guests have arrived. What an O'D. one might make on 'The Fleet of the Future'!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Hôtel de Milan, *Aug.* 14, 1865.

"When I read of Aytoun's death in the papers I knew how it would affect you. I am well aware what old ties linked you; and these old ties bind not only heart to heart, but attach a man to his former self, and make up the sweetest part of our identity. They are often, too, the only light that shines on the past, which would be dark and untraceable if love did not mark it.

"It is strange, but I feel (and I wrote it to my wife) that I thought I had lost a friend in losing him,—though we never met, and only knew each other in a few kindly greetings transmitted by yourself from one to the other. How right you are about the solemn fools! I go even farther,

and say that the solemn wise, the Gladstones of this world, are only half great in wanting that humouristic vein that gives a man his wide sympathy with other men, and makes him, through his very humanity, a something more than human. I am sure it is in no unfair spirit I say it, but the Aytoun type grows rarer every day. It is a commodity not marketable, and Nature somehow ceases to produce what has not its value in the *pièce courant.*

"I can't write a line here. My youngest daughter keeps me ever concocting new gaieties for her, and she has such an insatiable spirit for enjoyment the game never ends.

"Our fleet is becalmed outside Spezzia, but may be here at any moment.

"I shall send off the proof by book-post, and (if no other reach me) beseech you to remember that, being away from my wife and eldest daughter, I am neither to be relied upon for my orthographies nor my 'unities,' nor indeed any other 'ties. Look, therefore, sharply to my proof, and see that I am not ever obscure where I don't intend it.

"I see no chance of getting away before the end of the month, and till I reach V. Morelli my ink-bottle is screwed up."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Hôtel de Milan, Spezzia, *Sept.* 2, 1865.

"I am in misery. Here I am, dining and being dined, eating, drinking, singing, sailing, swimming, pic-nicing, bedevilling,—everything, in short, but

writing. I have made incredible attempts to work. I have taken a room on the house-top; I have insulted the ward-room and d——d the cockpit; I have even sneered at the admiral. The evil, however, is—I have done but a few pages, and I send them to get printed, leaving you to determine whether we shall skip a month, or whether, completing the unfinished chapter, an instalment of about 12 pp. will be better than nothing. I am more disposed to this than leaving a gap, and I am still very wretched that my work should be ill done. Direct and counsel me.

"This miserable place has cost me a year's pay to keep, and now I hear that Elliott is sure to report me if I am found living in Florence,—another illustration of thrift, if I add a P.S. to the 'O'Dowd.'

"I am very sick of the row and racket I live in. I want my home and my quiet, and even my ink-bottle."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Sept.* 17, 1865.

"I got back here two days ago, after more real fatigue and exhaustion than I would again face for double my miserable place at Spezzia. These bluejackets have not only drunk me out of champagne and Allsopp, but so tapped myself that I am perfectly dry. The constant intercourse with creatures of mere action—with creatures of muscles, nerves, and mucous membranes, and no brains—

becomes one of the most wearing and weakening things you can imagine. Nor is it only the nine weeks lost, but God knows how many more it will take before I can get the machinery of my mind to work again: all is rusted and out of gear, and I now feel, what I only suspected, that it is in this quiet humdrum life I am able to work, and that I keep fresh by keeping to myself. An occasional burst (to London for instance) would be of immense value to me, but that even then should only be brief, and not too frequent.

"Is it necessary to say I could not write at Spezzia? I tried over and over again, and for both our sakes it is as well I did not persevere. I send, therefore, these two chapters, and a short bit to round off the last one. If you opine (as I do) that even a short link is better than a break, insert them next No., taking especial care to correct the new portion, and, indeed, to look well to all.

"To-morrow I set to work,—I hope vigorously, at least so far as intention goes,—and you shall have, if I'm able, a strong 'Sir B.' and an 'O'Dowd' for next month. I never for thirty years of monthly labour broke down before, and I am heartily ashamed of my shortcoming; but I repeat it is better to give short measure than poison the company.

"I like the tribute to poor Aytoun very much, and I condole heartily with you on the loss of one who walked so much of life at your side. I am sure the habit of writing turns out more of a man's nature to his friends than happens to those

who never commit themselves to print, and I am certain that his friends have their own reading of an author that is totally denied to his outer public. You knew Aytoun well enough to know if my theory does not apply to him.

"Don't be as chary of your letters as you have been. I'll so pepper you now with correspondence that you must reply."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Sept.* 24, 1865.

"You have herewith three chapters of 'Sir B.' for Nov. No., and if so be that you need a fourth, there will be time to write it when I see these in proof; but I thought it as well to keep the reader in suspense about the interview, all the more because I know no more of what is coming than he does! My impression is that these chapters will do: my womankind like them, and only complain that there are no female scenes in the No. But there shall be crinolines to the fore hereafter.

"I shall now set to work to write an 'O'Dowd' on my late Spezzia life and experiences.

"What a fuss they are making about the Fenians, as if rebellion was anything new in Ireland! It is only an acute attack of the old chronic complaint, and wants nothing but bleeding to cure it.

"Some vile sailor, I suspect, has walked off with my May No. Magazine, and I have not the beginning of the 'Sir B.' Will you send it to me?

"My wife is very poorly again, but this month

coming round renews so much sorrow to her that I suspect the cause may be there.

"I have just this moment heard that the new squadron is coming back to Spezzia. If so, it will be the ruin of me—that is, if I go there; and indeed I am seriously thinking of pitching my consular dignity to the devil, and becoming a gentleman again, if only, as my coachman says, 'for an alternative.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Oct.* 1, 1865.

"The squib I enclose will, I think, be well-timed. It is a letter supposed to be found on a Fenian prisoner, a Col. Denis Donovan, Assistant Adjutant-General, Fenian army, from Major-General M'Caskey, who has been asked to take command of the National Forces. It can be introduced to the reader thus.

"My wife says I have written nothing to equal this."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Oct.* 8, 1865.

"You will have received before this the Fenian squib. I have little courage to ask how you like it. Of course it would be easy enough to make a long and strong paper out of the condensed materials of M'Caskey, but I don't water my milk, though my experiences with the public might have taught me that it would suit us both best.

"I have mislaid—perhaps some one has carried

off—my 'Rebel Songs,' for I heard a threat of the kind in connection with some autograph balderdash. They are, however, no loss either to the cause or the public. The best was one called 'The Devil may care.' I add a verse (as it strikes me) for the public—

> "You don't read 'O'Dowd' and don't like its style;
> But then to my conscience I swear
> You buy things that are worse,
> And some not worth a curse,
> And for *my* part—the Devil may care!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Oct.* 12, 1865.

"Take care that M'Caskey's letter is not amongst the 'O'Dowds.' Cornelius never heard of him, nor has he any knowledge of 'Tony Butler.' Mind this.

"Send me the Horse-book of your Cavalry Officer, and I'll try and make a short notice of it. I want the book of Villa Architecture too. I was thinking of a paper (I have good bones for it) on the Italian fleet, wood and iron, but I foresee that I should say so many impertinent things, and hurt so many people I know, that I suspect on the whole it is better not to go on with it. What I am to do with my surplus venom when I close 'O'Dowd' I don't see, except I go into the Church and preach on the Athanasian Creed.

"Wolff is in Paris still, scheming in 'Turks.'

"It will astonish Lyons when he discovers what a heritage Bulwer has left him at Constantinople."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Oct.* 20, 1865.

"Your note and its 'padding' came to my hand a couple of hours ago. I thank you much for both, but more for the encouragement than the cash, though I wanted the last badly.

"I don't think there is a public for O'D. collectively. I don't think people will take more than a monthly dose of 'my bitters,' and I incline to suspect mawkish twaddle and old Joe Millers would hit the mark better. Shall I try? *At all events, make room if you can for the postscript I send you. Now I wrote it* at your *own suggestion* when *I read your note*, and it seems to me to embody the dispute. I have tried to put in a bit of Swift's tart dryness in the style.

"The telegram just announces Palmerston's death. Take care that his name does not occur in my last O'D. I don't remember using it, but look to it for me.

"What will happen now? I hear the Whigs won't have Russell, and that he won't serve under Clarendon.

"How I wish I were in England to hear all the talk. It is d——d hard to be chained up here and left only to bark, when I want to bite too."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Oct.* 23, 1865.

"Does it not strike you that a good view of Palmerston's character might be taken from considering how essentially the man was English,

and that in no other assembly than a British House of Commons would his qualities have had the same sway and influence? All that intense vitality and rich geniality would have been totally powerless in Austria, France, Italy, or even America. None would have accepted the glorious nature of the man, or the element of statesmanship, as the House accepted it. None would have seen that the spirit of all he did was the rebound of that public opinion which only a genial man ever feels or knows the value of. If I be right in this, depend upon it Gladstone will make a lame successor to him. God grant it!

"I send you a 'Sir B.' for December, as I am about to leave for Carrara for a few days. I hope it is good. It may be that another short chapter may be necessary, and if so there will be time for it when I come back.

"How I would like now if I had the time (but it would take time and labour too) to write an article on the deception which the Whigs have practised in trading on their Italian policy as their true claim to office. It is the most rascally fraud ever practised."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Oct.* 29, 1865.

"I send you two O'Ds.; that on Gladstone I think tolerably good. The short paper on 'The Horse,' being all done in the first person, I think had better be an 'O'Dowd,'—indeed I signed it such; but do as you like about this.

"I think there seems a very good prospect of the Tories coming in during the session. Phil Rose was here the other day and gave me good hopes, and said also they would certainly give me *something*. Heaven grant it! for I am getting very footsore, and would like to fall back upon a do-nothing existence, and never hear more of the public.

"The foreign papers are all — especially the Bonapartist ones—attacking Lord Russell as an 'Orleanist.' I never had heard of his leanings in that direction; but it is exactly one of those tendencies we should *not* hear of in England, but which foreigners would be certain to chance upon."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Friday, Nov.* 3, 1865.

"I am rather out of spirits,—indeed I feel that my public and myself are at cross-purposes.

"D—— their souls—(God forgive me)—but they go on repeating some stone-cold drollery of old Pam's, and my fun—hot and piping—is left untasted; and as to wisdom, I'll back O'Dowd against all the mock aphorisms of Lord Russell and his whole Cabinet. It would not do to touch Palmerston in O'D.: I could not go on the intensely laudatory tack, and any—the very slightest —qualification of praise would be ill taken. Do you know the real secret of P.'s success? It was, that he never displayed ambition till he was a rich man. Had Disraeli reserved himself in the

same degree, there would have been nothing of all the rotten cant of 'adventurer,' &c., that we now hear against him. *Begin* life rich in England, and all things will be added to you."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, FLORENCE, *Nov.* 6, 1865.

"I think the Bagmen deserve an 'O'Dowd'; their impertinent wine discussion is too much to bear. I don't suspect the general public will dislike seeing them lashed, and from the specimens I have met travelling, I owe some of the race more than I have given them.

"I think there is a good chance of a (short-lived) Conservative Government next year, and then Gladstone and *le Déluge*. Unless some great change resolves the two parties in the House into real open enemies (not camps where deserters cross and recross any day), we shall have neither political honesty nor good government.

"The present condition of things makes a lukewarm public and disreputable politicians."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, FLORENCE, *Nov.* 11, 1865.

"I would have sent another chapter to 'Sir Brook,' but that I have been sick and ill,—a sort of feverish cold, with a headache little short of madness. I am over it now, but very low and spiritless and unfit for work. . . .

"I have got a long letter from Whiteside this morning: he thinks that the conduct of the Palmer-

ston Whigs will decide the question as to who should govern the country. It is, however, decided that Gladstone is to smash the Irish Education scheme and to overturn the Church.

"I had written to him to press upon his friend the importance of restoring Hudson to his Embassy in the event of the Derby party coming to power, and he sent my letter as it was to Lord Malmesbury, though it contained some rather sharp remarks on Lord M.'s conduct while at F. O. He (W.) says Lord M. asked to keep the letter, and wrote a very civil reply.

"Look carefully to 'Sir B.' for me, for my head is a stage below correction. I composed some hundred O'Ds. in doggerel the night before last, and (I hear) laughed immoderately in my sleep."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Nov.* 30, 1865.

"If I be right, Lord R. will dodge both parties, say 'No' to neither, and, while cajoling the old Palmerston Whigs not to desert him, he'll by certain Radical appointments conciliate that party and bribe them to *wait.* In this sense I have written the O'Dowd, 'The Man at the Wheel.' I think it reasonably good. *That is, if my prediction be true:* otherwise it won't do at all; but we'll have time to see before we commit ourselves.

"I hope you'll like it, as also the sterner one on 'Hospitalities *ex-officio.*'

"The post here is now very irregular,—indeed since we're a capital the place has gone to the

devil. I don't know whether the dulness or the dearness be greatest.

"The Radicals, waiting for reform and taking the destruction of the Irish Church meanwhile, remind one of Nelson's coxwain's saying when asked if he would have a glass of rum or a tumbler of punch, that 'he'd be drinking the rum while her ladyship was mixing the punch.' Ireland is to be complimented for her projected rebellion by fresh concessions. Never was there such a splendid policy.

"The Italians say, 'The toad got no tail at the creation of the world because he never asked for one.' Certes, my countrymen won't be deficient in their caudal appendages on such grounds.

"I am hipped by bad weather, undeveloped gout, and other ills too numerous to mention, but still——"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Spezzia, *Dec.* 4, 1865.

"In reply to your note, and its enclosure referring to a passage in one of my late 'O'Dowds' that an admiral is a sort of human rhinoceros, &c., I have simply to say that the joke is a very sorry one, and one of the worst I have ever uttered, if it give offence; but I most distinctly declare that I never entertained the most distant idea of a personality. Indeed my whole allusion was to the externals of admirals,—a certain gruffness, &c., which in itself is much too superficial a trait to include a personality.

"That I could say anything offensive to or of a service from which I have received nothing but politeness and courtesy, and some of whose members I regard as my closest and best friends, seems so impossible a charge against me that I know not how to answer it. Indeed nothing is left for me but a simple denial of intention. It then remains, perhaps, to apologise for an expression which may be misapprehended. I do so just as frankly. I think the men who so read me, read me wrongfully. No matter; my fault it is that I should be open to such misconstruction, and I ask to be forgiven for it.

"So much of reparation is in my power (if time permit), and I would ask you to assist me to it—to omit the entire passage when you republish the papers in a volume.

"Will you, in any form that you think best, convey the explanation and the amends to the writer of the note you have enclosed?"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Dec.* 4, 1865.

"I have just read the note you enclosed me calling my attention to my having said that an admiral was a sort of 'human rhinoceros.' I beg to recant the opinion, and when opportunity serves I will do so publicly, and declare that I believe them to be the most thin-skinned of mortals, otherwise there was nothing in the paragraph referred to which could give the slightest offence.

"To impute a personality to it would be for

the reader to attach the passage to some one to whom he thought it applicable, if there be such.

> "When they mentioned vice or bribe,
> It's so pat to all the tribe,
> Each cried that was levelled at me.

"Now I had not the vaguest idea of a personality; I was simply chronicling a sort of professional gruffness and mysteriousness,—both admirable in the way of discipline, doubtless, but not so agreeable socially as the gifts of younger and less responsible men.

"Omit the whole passage, however, when you republish the papers; and accept my assurance that if ever I mention an admiral again, I will insert the word 'bishop' in my MS., and only correct it with the proof.

"It is not easy to be serious in replying to such a charge of 'doing something prejudicial to the service.' There is no accounting, however, for phraseology, as Mr Carter called the loss of his right eye 'a domestic calamity.'

"Once more, I never meant offence. I never went within a thousand miles of a personality; and if ever I mention the sea-service again, I hope I may be in it.

"*P.S.*—Make the fullest disclaimer on my part, if you can, to the quarter whence came the letter, as to either offence or personality,—but more particularly the latter. I am only sorry that the letter, not being addressed to myself, does not

enable me to reply to the writer with this assurance."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *Dec.* 7.

"Out of deference to my wife's opinion I wrote a mild disclaimer that might satisfy Admiral Kellett as to my intentions, &c. I have, since I wrote, heard confidentially that the Maltese authorities are trying to bring the matter before F. O. Now I am resolved not to make a very smallest submission, or even to go to the barest extent of an explanation.

"The only 'personality' in the article was the reference to an admiral that I respected and admired. I am perfectly ready to maintain that this was not Admiral Kellett.

"If you like to forward my first note, do so, but on no account let the civil one reach him. Indeed very little reconsideration showed me that such an appeal as K.'s bespoke a consummate ass, and ought not to be treated seriously. This will explain why I despatched a telegram to you this morning to use the first, not the amended, letter. My first thoughts are, I know, always my best.

"I shall be delighted if they make an F. O. affair of it: to have an oportunity of telling the cadets there what I think of the 'Authority,' and how much respect I attach to their 'opinion,' would cure me of the attack that is now making my foot fizz with pain.

"I am annoyed with myself for being so much annoyed as all this; but if you knew to what lengths I went to make these bluejackets enjoy themselves, — what time, money, patience, pleasantry, and bitter beer I spent in their service,—you would see that this sort of requital is more than a mere worry."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Florence, *Dec.* 1865.

"My wife is miserable at the sharp note I sent in reply to the admiral. She says it was all wrong, *because*, as I never did mean a personality, I ought to have no hesitation in saying as much, &c., &c.

"In fact, she makes me send the enclosed, and ask you to forward it to Kellett—that is, if *you* agree with her. For myself, I own I am the aggrieved party; I was d——d civil to the whole menagerie, rhinoceros included. I half ruined myself in entertaining them, and now I am rebuked for a little very mild pleasantry and very weak joking.

"What! is it because ye are bluejackets there shall be no more 'O'Dowds'? Ay, marry, and very hot ones too—and sharp in the mouth.

"All right as to the new tariff. It is a great [? nuisance] to me that the public does not like its devilled kidneys in wholesale, but perhaps we may make the palate yet: I'll try a little longer, at all events. But if the Tories come in and make me a tide-waiter, I'll forswear pen-and-ink and only write for 'The Hue and Cry.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*Dec.* 11, 1865.

"Your first objection to Cave's 'spoonyness'[1] I answer thus. Cave was heartily ashamed of himself for having played at stakes far above his means, and, like a man so overwhelmed, was ready to do, say, or approve of anything in his confusion. I was drawing from life in this sketch.

"2nd, Sewell's addressing the men in his town so carelessly. He never saw them before; they came, hundreds, to see a race, and his acquaintances and the public were so mingled. He addressed them with an insolence not infrequent in Englishmen towards 'mere Irish,' and only corrected himself when pulled up.

"I am deep in thinking over the story; and though I have not written a line, I am *at it* night and day."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Florence, *Dec.* 12, 1865.

"I have just got your note. I need not say it has not given me pleasure, for I really thought—so little are men judges of their own work—that there were some of these O'Ds. equal to any I ever wrote. The paper that requires either explanation or defence can't be good, and so I accept the adverse verdict. I make no defence, but I must make explanation.

"In the 'Prof. Politeness' paper there is no personality whatever. I simply expressed divergence

[1] In 'Sir Brook Fossbrooke.'

of doctrine by the opposite poles — Exeter and Cashel, Colenso and Carlisle; but you will see that I never instanced these men, or any other individuals, as likely to offer their pulpits.

"As to the practice, I have seen it over and over, and I can vouch for it in hospitals, home and foreign, as well.

"I have expunged 'Times,' and made the word 'newspapers'; I have cancelled 'C. Connellan' altogether. And now I trust your fear of an action must be relieved,—though if Corney Connellan were to be offended, I might really despair of a joke being well taken by any one."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Christmas Day.*

"I send you a full measure of 'Sir B.' for next month, and despatch it now, as I have only remained here to eat my Christmas dinner, and start to-morrow for Spezzia, where I have some eight or ten days' work before me.

"I hope you will like the present 'envoy.' I have taken pains with the dialogue, and made it as sharp and touchy as I could.

"There is, I hear, a compact *in petto* between the Whigs and the Irish by which all Irish Education is to be made over to the Church of Rome. If so, a paper on the way in which countries, essentially Romish, reject the priest's domination and provide against all subjugation to the Church, might be well timed. It has only struck me this morning, but it is worth you turn-

ing your mind to, especially if the papers were to be ready and in print for the eventuality of the debate in Parliament, and *debate there will be on the question.*

"I am not sure I could do such a paper, but I could be of use to any one who could, and give him some valuable material, too, from Italian enactments.

"I do not know if my Belgium bit reached you in time, and our post is now so irregular here I may not know for some days.

"I hear that the Government mean to hand over Eyre to the Radicals; and though there is much in his case hard to defend, that the man did his best in a great difficulty according to 'his lights' I am convinced.

"I have such a good story for you about Drummond Wolff *versus* Bulwer, — but I can't write it. You shall hear it, however, when I come over in spring, even if I go down to Edinburgh to tell it.

"A great many happy Christmases to you and all yours."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Croce di Malta, Spezzia, *Dec.* 30, 1865.

"Your last pleasant note and its 'stuffing' has just reached me here, where I am consularising, bullying Custom-house folk, and playing the devil with all the authorities to show my activity in the public service. I can't endure being away from home and my old routine life; but there

was no help for it, and I am here now for another week to come.

"The name I want for the author of Tony is 'Arthur Helsham,' the name of my mother's family; and the last man who bore the aforesaid was the stupidest blockhead of the house, and the luckiest too. *Faustum sit augurium.*

"As to G. Berkeley's book, it is quite impossible to do anything at all commensurate with so rascally a book. It is hopeless work trying to make a sweep dirtier, and I agree with you—better not touch him."

XVI.

FLORENCE AND SPEZZIA.

1866.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Jan.* 3, 1866.

"I came back from Spezzia this morning to find your pleasant letter and its enclosure. I thank you much for both. I wanted the money not a little, but half suspect I wanted the kind assurances of your satisfaction just as much. I was not content with your opinion of the last 'O'Dowds,' most probably from some lurking suspicion that you might be right, and that they were not as good as they ought to be, or as I meant them to be. Now I am easier on that score,—and since I have seen them in print I am better pleased also.

"My Xmas was cut in two: I was obliged to go down to Spezzia the day after Christmas Day and stay there ever since, idling, far from pleasantly, and living at a bad inn somewhat dearer than the Burlington. I could not write while there; but I have turned over a couple of 'O'Dowds' in my head, and if they be heavy don't print them,

and I'll not fret about it. It's not very easy, in a place like this, where the only conversation is play or intrigue, to find matters of popular interest.

"I often wish I could break new ground; but I'm too old, perhaps, to transplant. But I'll not grumble now: it's Christmas, and I wish you and all around you every happiness that Christmas should bring.

"I hope you like my last envoy of 'Sir B.,' which I trust to see in proof in a few days.

"I was half tempted to make an 'O'Dowd' on the recent installation of a Knight of St Patrick, as described in an Irish paper: 'The mantle is worn over one shoulder and falls gracefully on the ground, the legend *Quis Separabit* being inscribed on the decoration of the collar.' What with the trailing garment, I was sorely tempted to translate *Quis Separabit* 'Who'll tread on me?'

"I was right glad to read of Fergusson's honours. What a manly bold letter that was of his about the Negro atrocities. I vow to God I have not temper to write of them.

"I hear young Lytton is likely to lose his sight,—some terrible inflammation of the iris, I believe, and it is feared must end in total blindness."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Jan.* 5, 1866.

"I am so 'shook' by a bad train and a [? wetting] that I can scarcely hold a pen, and my head is still addled with the crash and reverbera-

tion of big guns, for I have been 'assisting' at the trial of armour-plates, with steel shot, for the Italian Navy,—though what they have to do with the subject, seeing that they neither fire at the enemy or wait to be fired at, is more than I know.

"Persano was so overcome by terror that he was literally carried down the ladder to his gig, when he changed his flag to the *Affondatore*. The *on dit* is he will be dismissed from the service. Quite enough, God knows, for any shortcoming; for bravery, after all, as Dogberry says of reading and writing, is 'the gift of God.'

"We have had a sombre Xmas here: my wife very ill, and the rest of us poorly enough.

"There is not a word of news. A small squabble with the Turks, who fired at one of the ships, has made the Italians warlike once more, and they are crying out, 'Hold me, for you know my temper!' But it will blow over after some ungrammatical interchange of despatches, and be forgotten.

"Hardman was dining with me the other day, when an Italian admiral—the ablest man they have—launched out fiercely against 'The Times' and its Italian correspondent. The thing was too late for remedy, but Hardman's good sense prevented further embarrassment."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Jan.* 7, 1866.

"I hope long ere this your face-ache has left you. I dread these neuralgic things, having had one or

two seizures of them: and they are so infernally treacherous; they come back just when one is triumphing over being rid of them.

"I send you some O'Ds. One, I hope, will please you—the 'Two Rebellions.' I know you will go with me in the d——d cowardice of the newspaper fellows talking to a man in a pinch and saying how he should behave. I had one of these men out in my boat at Spezzia, and such a pluckless hound I never saw, and yet if you read his Garibaldian articles in the paper, you'd have thought him a paladin!

"I read this O'D. aloud here, and it was thought the best I had done for some time. The 'Extradition' is not bad, the rest are so-so.

"You will see I am right in condemning the conduct of the Catholic party about Fenianism, and also as to the intentions of the Government of rewarding their loyalty! It will be a great parliamentary fight, and my paper will be well timed.

"Is Mrs Blackwood coming to town this spring? I'd like to think we could see the Burlington repeat itself, and be as jolly as it was last year. It did me a world of good as to spirits and courage that trip, though it made a hole in my time—and my pocket.

"I am afraid I must go down to Spezzia again, and for a week too. The cares of office are heavy, and I am afraid I serve a country ungrateful enough not to appreciate me."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Jan.* 20, 1866.

"I have been obliged to put off Spezzia till the 20th, but shall have to pass a week or ten days there *then.* Meanwhile I am at work thinking over (not writing) 'Sir Brook.' I want to do the thing well, but I have not yet got the stick by the handle.

"From what I can pick up from those who read O'D., no paper ought to have more than one joke. One plum to a pudding is the English taste. All the rest must be what the doctors call 'vehicle,' and drollery be administered in drop doses. Of course I get public opinion in a very diluted form here, — but such is the strength in which it reaches me.

"Robt. Lytton is better, — one eye safe, and hopes of the other. Have you heard that Oliphant has been dangerously ill at N. York?—a menace of softening of the brain having declared inself, and of course such a malady is never a mere threat. I am sincerely sorry for him, and so will you be.

"My trip to town will depend on the events in the House. If our friends come in I will certainly go over. Tell Mrs Blackwood to read O'Dowd on 'Thrift': she will see that there are certain people it will never do with."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Feb.* 3, 1866.

"If what I hear be true, our friends have made a precious 'fiasco' of it in their game of politics.

They have so palpably shown Lord Russell all the weak points of his Bill—every damaging ingredient in it—that he has deliberately changed the whole structure, enlarged its provisions, and made it (appear at least) such a measure as may settle the question of Reform for some years to come. It is so like the Conservatives! They certainly are more deficient in the skill required to manage a party than any section in the House. Why, in Heaven's name, show their hand? and above all, why show it before the trump-card was turned? If their cause were twice as good as it is, and if the men who sustain it were fourfold as able, the press of the Party would reduce it to insignificance and contempt. Never was such advocacy in the world as 'The Herald' and 'Standard.'

"A few days ago, and even his own papers declared Lord R. was rushing to his ruin; but the Conservatives cried out 'Take care!' and he has listened to the warning. A mere franchise reform must have inevitably wrecked him. The very carrying it would have been a success that must have been worse than any defeat. I don't think that men so inept as the Tories deserve power, and I'm sure they could not retain it if they got it.

"I hear Mill was a failure, and I own I'm not sorry. I hate the men he belongs to, either in letters or politics. Bright was certainly good. It was Bow-wow! but still a very good Bow-wow! —better than the polished platitudes of Gladstone, which the world accepts as philosophy.

"But confound their politics. I send you 'B. F.,' and I send it early, because I want the proof back as soon as you can. I am going to idle, but whether at Rome or across to Sardinia, or only over to Elba, I have not decided. I am hipped and want some change,—the real malady being I'm growing old, and don't like it, and revenge my own stupidity by thinking the people I meet insupportably dull and tiresome."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Feb.* 5, 1866.

"I begin a short note to you now that I have just got back, full sure that I shall have to acknowledge one from you before I finish.

"I am glad to see 'The Times' extract largely from the 'Two Rebellions.' The Jamaica affair, I hear, will be the *acrimonious* fight of the session. What I am told is that the country will stand at present no Ministry of which Gladstone is not a part, and that if Lord R. goes (as he may), it must be some patchwork of Stanley, Gladstone, and some mild members of the Conservative party. One thing I am *assured* is certain,—Gladstone is far less liberal than he was.

"I own I am more puzzled than enlightened by all this, but I give it as I get it.

"Jamaica is a bad business. Had they lynched Gordon it would have been all right; but the mock justice was dreadful! Besides, it really pushes High Churchism too far to hang a man because he has not attended a vestry.

"The post is in, and no letter from you. No matter! I meant to idle to-day; and so I'll stroll into Florence and gossip at the Legation, where I can post you the three 'O'Dowds' I have done for next month, — a short paper, but perhaps long enough. I wrote 'The Tiger' under the infliction of a d——d old Indian, who'll kill *me* if this paper doesn't kill *him*.

"Do you know anything of a new magazine which Cholmondeley Pennell is going to edit? Bulwer and Browning are, I believe, in his interest. He writes me a long yarn about it, but I think he has too many poets on his list for success.

"It struck me last night what a good *Noctes* might be made out of your corps,—with Lytton, Hamley, Oliphant, and O'Dowd all talking after their several ways. Wouldn't it be a rare bit of fun?

"A millionaire countryman of yours has actually beggared me at whist, and the d——d ass can't play at all."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Florence, *March* 10, 1866.

"I have corrected this without my wife's aid, for she is too weak and poorly to help me, and it will require careful looking over. I am glad you like it; I rather think well of it on re-reading.

"I believe my holiday is knocked up, and a chance of O'Dowding the Pope to be deferred, for I must hasten off to Spezzia to meet a Royal Commission on the Arsenal. I hope I may have

the O'D. proof before I go, as I may be detained a week.

"Have you any weekly ('Saturday Review,' 'Examiner,' 'Spectator,' or other) that has literary news, reviews, &c., disposable? if so, and perfectly convenient, send it to me occasionally, for I get too much 'bent' in politics,—*malgré moi.*

"I really would rather be porter to the House than a lord-in-waiting."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *March* 14, 1866.

"A patchwork quilt is cakes and gingerbread compared to this blessed proof, but I'm in and out a Georges Dandin! You said, and said truly, that the sketch of the House was meagre, and I have dilated — I hope not diluted — it; but my writing is open to that rendering.

"I have made the 'Fenian Pest' also a little fatter. Will you try and see that the slips come on at their proper places.

"I am not well. It may be gout, it may be fifty things, but it *feels* d—ly like breaking up. I ought to be at Spezzia, but I am so out of sorts that I don't like leaving home. After all, I have no right to complain. I have been a good many years in commission, and never docked yet for repairs!

"Dizzy is going to let Gladstone have a walk over for the first racing, but I suspect that the real jockeyship will be to make the first and last heats the race."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *March* 26, 1866.

"It is only to-day that I feel able to write a line and thank you. Your letter and cheque reached me two days ago, but I did not like to make my daughter write to you lest you should feel alarmed at it.

"I am a little better,—I am, that is to say, in less pain, but very weak and low. I believe I shall rub through it, but it must be a close thing. It was, after all, only what Curran called 'a run-away knock,' but it sounded wonderfully as if I was wanted.

"They don't talk any more of knife-work, and, so far, I am easier in mind; but my nerves are so shaken by pain and bad nights that whatever promised relief would be welcome.

"I have two chaps. of 'Sir B.' ready, but perhaps next week — I hope so — I will be able to go on. It would be a comfort to me to be at work."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *April* 5, 1866.

"I send you enough to make the May 'Sir Brook,'—at least it will be wellnigh a sheet. I am gaining, but slowly. My debility is excessive, partly from all the blood I have lost; but my head is free, and I think I could work better than usual if I had the strength for it.

"All my thanks for your kindest of notes and the O'D. enclosure. I could not acknowledge them earlier, for I kept all my pen-power for the story. Try and let me have it back soon; and, meanwhile, I mean to change the air and go to Carrara. The doctors think that I must have patience, and abstain from all treatment for a while. It is evidently as hard to launch me (into the next world) as to get the *Northumberland* afloat. I stick on the 'ways,' and the best they can say of me is that I have, up to this, received 'no fatal damage.'

"I wish I was near enough to talk to you: my spirits are not bad, and when out of pain I enjoy myself much as usual.

"What a fiasco the Derby party are making of the situation! At a time when it is all-important to conciliate the outlaying men of all parties they single them out for attack, as [? for example] Whiteside's stupid raid against Sir Robert Peel for the escape of Stephens. There never was a party in which the man-of-the-world element was so lamentably omitted. . . .

"After all, it is a party without a policy, and they have to play the game like the fellows one sees punting at Baden, who, when they win a Louis, change it at once and go off to the silver table."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *April* 16, 1866.

"It was a great relief to my mind to know that 'Sir B.' was up to the mark, as your note tells me, for I felt so shaken by illness that very little would have persuaded me the whole craft was going to pieces; and all they said to me *here* I took as mere encouragement, though, sooth to say, my home critics do not usually spoil me by flatteries. I am better, but not on the right road somehow. I am deplorably weak, and my choice seems to be between debility and delirium tremens, for to keep up my strength I drink claret all day long.

"How the Conservatives must have misplayed the game! To show the Ministry the road out of the blunder was as stupid a move as ever was made, and yet it is what they have done. They ought, besides, to have widened their basis at once by making Lord Stanley a *pont du diable* to reach Lowe and Horsman. There is a current hypocrisy in English public opinion — about admitting new men — sharing the sweets of office and such like. Why not cultivate it?

"From men who ought to know, I am told war is *certain* between Prussia and Austria.

"There is a rumour here that Italy offered terms to Austria for the cession of Venice, even to the extent of troops! It is hard to believe it. The Austrian alliance, if it were possible, would be the crowning policy of Italy and the only barrier

against France; but national antipathies are hard to deal with, and here they are positively boundless."

To Dr Burbidge.

"Florence, *Friday, April* 1866.

"My thanks for your most kind note. My attack was only a 'runaway knock' after all. I believe when the *pallida mors* does come, he gives a summons that there's no mistaking. But I was only ill enough to suggest to *myself* the way by which I might become worse, and now it's all over.

"I cannot make up my mind about the house till I go down and see in what state I receive it. There is, I suspect, *very* little furniture; but I mean to see, and decide soon, if I can. I assure you I look on £90 for a very poor quarter in a very poor place as a large rent, though you do persist in knocking my head off on account of my extravagance, which is a mere tradition, and you might as well bring up against me my idleness at school. The worst is, I used formerly to make money as easily as I spent it. I now find a great disinclination to work—that is, I am well aware, an expression for a disability."

To Dr Burbidge.

"Casa Capponi, Florence, *Thursday, May* 1866.

"By a telegram from Sanders, received too late to reply to by post yesterday, I learned that our funds had amounted to sixty-five pounds, and

I accordingly wrote to 'My Lord' to state as much, and also that the congregation, alike in grateful recognition of the gratuitously afforded services of Doctor Burbidge, as in the very fullest desire to secure his services, had appointed him to the chaplaincy,—a nomination which, in the event of any subsidy from the F. Office, they earnestly hoped his lordship would confirm.

"I believe I said it in rather choice phrase, but that was the substance, and I am very hopeful that he will do all that we ask.

"My wife had another attack of the *rigor* and fever yesterday, and Wilson apprehends some tertian character has inserted itself into the former illness. She is very ill indeed, so much so that although my married daughter is confined to bed and seriously ill at a hotel only a few hundred yards off, Julia cannot leave the house to see her. You see how impossible it would be for me to be away.

"I write very hurriedly, but I wished you to know that all, so far as we can do it, is now done, and if F. O. will only be as gracious as I hope, we shall have accomplished our great wish, and the Spezzia chaplaincy be a fact."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *May* 2, 1866.

"Herewith goes the next 'Sir B.' I was very glad indeed to get your last few lines, for I am low, low! I can't pick up, somehow. But I don't want to bore you with myself or *mes maux*.

"So they won't resign! I think, on the whole,

it's as well,—I mean, that seeing what sort of composite thing a new Government must be, and how the Whigs have been beaten by a 'byblow' —not in a fair fight by the regular Opposition,— it's better to wait and see.

"Here we are going to war and to bankruptcy together. The only question is, Which will be first? That infernal knave L. Nap. has done it all, and the Italians are always cheated by him through thinking that they are greater cheats than himself. But an old boatman of mine at Spezzia said, 'There are three *nations* that would out-rogue the devil,—the Calibrese, the Corsicans, and the *Pigs*.' How the last came to their nationality I can't explain.

"You have seen notice of the Bishop of Limerick's death. I don't think he has, in one respect, left his equal behind him in the Irish Bench. He was the most thoroughly tolerant man I ever knew, and half a dozen men like him would do more to neutralise the acrimony of public feeling in Ireland than all the Acts of Parliament. His intellect was just as genial as his heart."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *May* 15, 1866.

"I wish I could pack myself up in the envelope that holds this and join you at breakfast in that pleasant parlour in the Old Burlington, where we laughed so much last spring; but there are good reasons for not saluting the General, beginning with the small one, 'no powder.'

"Here we are in ruin. Gold and silver are all withdrawn from circulation, and the small notes promised by the Government delayed in issue to enable a set of scoundrelly officials to sell the reserve gold at 10 per cent and silver at 12. The banks will not discount, nor will they advance (the latter of most moment to *me*), and we are in all the pains of bankrupcty without that protection which a prison affords against dunning.

"I sent off 'Sir B.' proof to-day to W. B. I am sincerely glad you like it.

"I make no way towards strength or spirits. I believe with *me* they mean the same thing.

"If we have no war, we shall have a revolution here. All the good powder will not be wasted!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *June* 11, 1866.

"Is it ignorant or wilful stupidity in the English papers that ignores the part L. Nap. is playing in the foreign imbroglio? It is one or the other. The whole machinery is his; and the very hot enthusiasm we see here was first excited by P. Napoleon's visit and the encouragement the 'Reds' got from him.

"If Elliot were worth a sou, England would have been able to avert the war. There was one moment in which Austria would have listened, *if only warned* of the *treachery* planned against her. Hudson would have been the man here.

"Don't send me any bill or cheque, for we are

deluged with paper money here, and are obliged to pay from 5 to 8 per cent to change large notes into small. Even the 100-f. note costs this. I must try and get money out in gold (Naps., not sovereigns) through F. O. Any of the messengers will take it. Could you find out for me if it would be more profitable to buy Naps. in London, or change notes or sovereigns for them in Paris? Already this new form of robbery is half ruining us all here.

"I have been living on loans from my wife for six months, and she has at last stopped the supplies, though I have willingly offered to raise the rate of interest. Perhaps she suspects I shall not be able to raise the wind."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Croce di Malta, Spezzia, *June* 15, 1866.

"Here I am at my post. Spezzia is about to receive a new accession of greatness and become the station for transmitting the post to England and France, as the Bologna line will have to be given up entirely to the army to advance or retreat on, as events may determine.

"I have been three days here. I am the only *stranger* (!) in the place. All the hotels empty, and I have the Gulf to my own swimming.

"There's a pretty little girl, a granddaughter of Lord Byron, here—Lady Arabella Nash—on a visit to the Somervilles.

("By the way, has granddaughter *two d's* or

one? I have left it *both* ways in the proof which I send you by this post.)

"I wish I could get a house down here, and retire from the pomps and short whists of life, the odd tricks and all the honours!

"There is one—only one; but the scoundrel asks me an iniquitous rent. He knows, Italian like, that I have a fancy for it, and he'll keep it unlet to torture me.

"I shall be back in time for the O'D. proof (if it should be sent out), and you shall have it by return.

"One comfort—at least we are promised it—of the new postal line will be an express train down here, for at present the railroad is only something above a fast walking pace, and the cabs at the station always announce to the late arrivals that they can overtake the train at will.

"Do you believe in war yet? And how long do you believe you can keep out of it? The French Emperor's real reluctance is not knowing what England might do with a change of Government, what Tory counsels might advise, and what possible alliance with Russia might ensue if it was once clearly seen what the aggressive designs of France meant. Many here assert (and not fools either) that L. Nap. has decided on taking the old 'Cisalpine Gaul' (with Turin, &c.)."

To Mr Alexander Spencer.

"Florence [*or* Spezzia], *June* 17, 1866.

"I am in the midst of great difficulties. Chapman & Hall, after years of intercourse, have shown

the cloven foot, and are displaying [tactics] which, if successful, will wrest from me all my copyrights and leave me ruined. The story is long and intricate, nor could I at all events bore you with a recital which nothing but time, temper, and good management may conduct to a good result. My present anxiety is [to know] if [ ] remitted to you £60 to go towards the insurances. He says he did, but he is well capable of deceiving me. I had half a mind to go over to England the other day and put the affair into a lawyer's hands, but my difficulty was to know how, having begun such litigation, I was to bear its charges and at the same time earn my daily bread.

"Fred Chapman is now here, having come out to induce me to give him an assignment of all my copyrights as security for a debt they claim against me of £2500, but which I utterly deny and dispute.

"Drop me one line to say if the £60 has reached you.

"How are you all, and how does time treat you? I am growing terribly old — older than I ever thought or feared I should feel myself. Does my last book please you? Some of my critics call it my best; but I have lost faith in them as in myself, and I write as I live—from hand to mouth.

"My poor old friend James has just died at Venice, an utter break-up of mind having preceded the end."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, *June* 24, 1866.

"I see by the telegram that the Whigs have resigned, and it is [Lord Dunkellin's] jaw-bone has slain the giant. Oh dear, do you know him? He dined here with us some short time ago, with Gregory and some others, and we thought him the poorest thing of the lot.

"I have great doubts that our people can form an Administration. They have the cane too, it is true, to help them; but they may have to give all the plums to their supporters, and their old friends won't like eating the 'dough' for *their* share of the pudding.

"Worse than this is the miserable press of the Party. Can't men see that the whole tone of public opinion in England has taken the Italian side of the Venetian question? There is no longer a right and wrong in these things when sympathies —and something stronger than sympathies—come in; and the stupid 'Standard' goes on raving about treaties scarcely a rag of which remain, and which every congress we have held since '13 has only demolished some part of. If Austria be wise and fortunate she will take Silesia and make peace with Italy, ceding Venice. What every one wants is securities against France; but we have converted the brigand into a sheriff's officer, and thrown an air of legality over all his robberies.

"That Europe endures the insolence of his late letter is the surest evidence of the miserable cowardice of the age.

"The scene of the king's departure here was very touching. He left at 3 o'clock on Monday, just as day was breaking, but the whole city was up and in the streets to take leave of him. All the ladies in their carriages, and the great squares crammed as I never saw them on Monday. The king was so moved that he could not speak, and the enthusiasm was really overwhelming. If this army gets a first success it will dash on gallantly and do well; if it be repulsed——

"Should the Conservatives come in, will they have the wit to offer the mission here to Hudson? It would do more for them as a party than forty votes in the House. It would stop at once the lurking suspicion as to their retrograde tendencies in Italy, on which Palmerston taunted them, and by which he kept them out of office for years.

"I own I have no confidence in the world-wisdom of Conservatives. They know the Carlton, and they know, not thoroughly but a good deal of, the 'House'; but of Englishmen at large and the nation, — of what moderate, commonplace, fairly educated and hard-headed people say and think,—they know nothing. But one has only to look at them to see that they represent idiosyncrasies, not classes. Lytton and Disraeli are only types of two families.

"How well the Yankees have behaved in this Fenian brawl! Let us not be slow to acknowledge it. If I were a man in station I would say, now is the time to pay all Alabama claims, and not higgle whether we owe them or not. Now is the moment

not to be outdone in generosity, but say let us have done once and for ever with this miserable bickering—let us criticise each other frankly and fairly, but in the spirit of men who wish each other well. As for *us*, we want one ally who *will really understand us*, and if we could once get the Yankee to see that we meant to be civil to him, we *might* make a foundation for a friendship that would serve us in our day of need.

"We are actually deluged now with war correspondents—'Times,' 'Post,' 'Telegraph,' 'D. News,' &c. By the way, what a series might be made of M'Caskey's advices for the war: insolent braggart notices of what was and what ought to have been done, &c. I thought of it yesterday when I had a lot of these war Christians at dinner.

"Only think, there is a Queen's messenger called Nigor Hall (Byng Hall, or, as the Frenchmen call him, 'Bunghole') who, criticising Tony Butler, said I had made a gross blunder in making him lose his despatches. Now the same B. H. has just lost the whole Constantinople bag on arriving at Marseilles, and Louis Nap. is diligently conning over Lyons' last missives to F. O. and seeing what game we are 'trying on' to detach Russia from France.

"*P.S.*—I send an instalment of 'Sir B.,' and let me have it early, as I am drawing towards the 'Tattenham corner of the race.' I want to see how it looks. Read it carefully, and give me your shrewdest criticism.

"I have just heard that there is a plot here to carry off Cook's excursionists for ransom by the brigands. What a good 'O'Dowd' it would make to warn them!

"The first shot is to be fired by the Italians to-morrow, the anniversary of 'St Martin's,' which they think they won!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *June* 28, [1866].

"I begin this at midnight, the first cool moment of the twenty-four hours, to finish to-morrow some time before post hour. I see that you have learned our disaster here already—a sore blow, too, to a young army: but *que voulez-vous?* La Marmora is an ass, with a small head and a large face like Packington. You might make a first lord of him, but never a general. The attack of the first division had never been intended to do more than draw out the Austrians and encourage the belief that the *grand* attack was to follow: meanwhile Cialdini was to have crossed the Po and moved on Rovigo. The blundering generals made a real movement of it, and got a real thrashing for their pains. The division was all but cut to pieces. They fought well—there's no doubt of it; they even bore beating, which is more than one would have said of them. The king was twice surrounded and all but made prisoner, and the princes behaved splendidly.

"It is a great misfortune that they should have met a repulse at first. I say this because they

must have Venice, and I think the great thing is that they should have it without French intervention. I hope if the Conservatives come in that they will see this, and see that Italy cannot go back without being a French province. If we have a policy at all,—sometimes I doubt it,—it is to prevent or *delay* French aggrandisement. That stupid bosh of volunteer soldiering has so bemuddled English brains that they fancy we have an army. Why, a costermonger with his donkey might as well talk of his 'steed.' I wouldn't say this to a foreigner, nor let them say it to *me*, but it's true. If we could patch up the Italian quarrel and get Venice for them, and arrange an alliance between Italy and Austria, we should do more than by following the lead of Louis Napoleon and playing 'cad' to him through Europe.

"Are the Derbys really coming in? Who will be F. Secretary? I was going to say, 'Who wants me?'

"I was thinking of keeping a running comment on the war in 'O'Dowd,' the events jotted as they occurred, with such remarks as suggested themselves—a hotch-potch of war, morals, politics, &c. What think you? Of course, with a certain seriousness; it is no joking matter, in any view one takes of it.

"What a wonderful book 'Felix Holt' is! I read much of it twice over, some of it three times, and throughout there is a restrained power—a latent heat—far greater than anything developed. She at least suggests to *me* that her *dernier mot*

is not there on *anything*. It is not a pleasant book as to the effect on the mind when finished; but you cannot forget it, and you cannot take up another after it. It is years since anything I read has taken the same hold upon me.

"Here has just come news that General Chiera has been shot by court-martial for treason, having betrayed the Italian plans to the Austrians. What next? The Neapolitans have earned a dark fame for themselves in all their late history. I don't know yet if the story is authentic.

"I have little confidence in the Tories' hold of office, and I have less still that they will do anything for *me*, though there is scarcely a man of the Party who has not given me pledges or assurances of remembrance.

"Malmesbury will, I hear, go to Ireland, and he will *do* there. There is not a people in the world who can vie with the Irish in their indifference to *real* benefits, and their intense delight in *mock* ones! When will you Saxons learn how to govern Ireland? When you want a treaty with King Hoolamaldla in Africa, you approach him not with a tariff and a code of reduced duties, but with strings of beads, bell-wire, and brass buttons, and why won't you see that Ireland can be had by something cheaper than Acts of Parliament!

"And my old friend Whiteside is to [be] Chief-Justice if Baron Lendrick (I mean Lefroy) will consent to retire! It is a grand comment on our judicial system, that when a man is too old for public life he is always young enough for the Bench.

"They once thought of putting me forward for Trinity Col. If I were ten years younger and ten pounds richer, I'd like to try my chance. I think I could do the light-comedy line in the House better than Bernal Osborne, and I'd like to *say*, before I die, some of the things that I now can only write."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *July* 2, 1866.

"This Italian defeat was even worse than we thought it: the loss of men was tremendous, and a great number of officers were killed. Of course there are all sorts of stories of treason, treachery, &c.,—nothing Italian ever happens without these; but I believe the whole mishap was bad generalship, a rash over-confidence, and a proportionate contempt for the Austrians, whom they believed to be all inferior troops, the best being sent to the north under Benedek.

"You are not likely to have any very accurate information in England, as La Marmora positively refuses to permit newspaper writers to accompany the army; and Hardman, though known to him, fares no better than the rest.

"I have learned, from what I know to be a good source of information, that the French mean to come in at once if the next battle be unfavourable to the Italians. This is the worst thing that can happen. It seals the vassalage of this people to France, and places the question of Rome and the Pope for ever out of Italian hands and in those of

their 'magnanimous ally,' whom may God confound! Ricasoli sees this plainly enough; but what can he do, or where turn him for aid?

"And so Lord Stanley's in F. O.! I suspect he knows very little of the Continent,—but it matters little. The limits of 'English policy' are fixed by the homilies of the Church, and we are to hope and pray, &c., and to get any one who likes it to believe it signifies what we do. We hear here of a great Prussian victory over Benedek: I hope it's not true. These Prussians, in their boastful audacity, coarse pretension, and vulgar self-sufficiency, are the Yankees of Europe, and, if they have a success, will be unendurable.

"I am sorry for the fate of the 'Reform' O'Dowd. I have begun one about the war here, and agree with you it is a theme to be *grave* upon. Indeed, I think any unseasonable levity would utterly spoil the spirit of these papers, and being separated, as they are, under various headings, it is always easy to give the proper tint and colour to each.

"Lowe ought to have the Colonies, not Lytton. *He* knows the subject well, and has infinitely more House of Commons stuff in him than the bewigged old dandy of Knebworth. If Lord Derby gives all the 'plums' to the Tories, the Administration will fall; and Naas, as Irish Secretary, is another blunder. Where are the '*under*' Secs. to be found? I fear that the Cabinet, like the army, will be a failure for want of non-commissioned officers. Serjeant Fitzgerald is not in the House, and a great loss he is. Gregory would not ill replace him, and

the opportunity to filch votes from the other side by office should not be lost sight of. It can be done *now*. It will be impossible later on.

"Of all the things the Party want, there is nothing they need like a press. I think that the advocacy of 'The Standard' would actually put Heaven in jeopardy, and 'The Herald' seems a cross between Cassandra and Moore's Prophetic Almanac."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, FLORENCE, *July* 12, 1866.

"I am rather eagerly—half-impatiently—looking out for O'D. in proof, and some tidings from yourself in criticism. I have gone over 'Sir B.,' and send it off corrected by this post. I more than suspect that I think it better than you do, or rather, that I think it is better than some parts you approved more of; but it's no new error of mine to find good in things of my writing that nobody but myself has ever discovered. With respect to the present part, I think probably it is too long for one paper, and might advantageously stop at chap. xx., leaving the 'Starlight' to begin Sept. No.

"If you agree with me, it will save me writing so much in this great heat (the thermometer is now 94° in my room), and I shall be free to watch the war notes.

"I want money, but don't cross your bill to Magnay for two reasons. I *might* get better exchange elsewhere; and second, I have overdrawn

him damnably, and he might be indelicate enough to expect payment.

"I hope the Party mean to do somewhat for me. It's an infernal shame to see Earle in the list and me—nowhere. For thirty years I have done them good service in novels and other ways, and they have given me what an under butler might hesitate over accepting."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *July* 16, 1866.

"I send you by this post the corrected proof of O'D. and a portion to add to the war notes. It's ticklish work prophesying nowadays; but so far as I can see, the imbroglio with France promises to become serious. We hear here that a strong fleet is at Toulon ready to sail for the Adriatic, and coupling this with the flat refusal of the Prince Napoleon to interfere (he being intensely Italian in his leanings), one may see that the French policy will not be over regardful of the feelings of this people. Genoa is being armed in haste, the sea-forts all munitioned and mounted with heavy guns; and as these cannot be intended against Austria, it is pretty clear that at last the Italians mean to strike a *real* blow for freedom. Spezzia, too, is arming, and the inaction heretofore observable in the Italian fleet may not improbably be ascribed to the fact that tougher work is before them than a petty fight with the Austrian flotilla. The Italians have fourteen ironclads, some of them

really splendid ships, and one, the *Affondatore*, lately built in England, the equal of almost any afloat. They are well armed and well manned; and though I don't think they could *beat* the French, they could make a strong fight against the *French Mediterranean squadron*, and would, I am sure, not bring discredit on their service I am sure the 'country'—I mean the people of England—would go with the Government that would succour a young nation struggling to assert its liberty. I do not mean that we should rashly proclaim war, but simply show that the national sympathy of England was opposed to all coercion of Italy and averse to seeing the Peninsula a French province. I feel certain Louis Napoleon would listen to such remonstrances coming from a *Conservative* Cabinet, where 'meddling and muddling' were not traditions.

"The Emperor counts so completely on English inaction that the mere show of a determined policy would arrest his steps. The complexity of the game increases every hour, and any great battle fought in Germany may decide the fate of Italy.

"You will see how my first part of O'D. predicted the cession of Venice. I am rather proud of my foresight.

"There is great dissatisfaction here felt about the inaction of the Italian fleet. Some allege they want coals, some say courage. I don't believe either: I think they were sent off so undisciplined and so hastily 'conscripted,' they are mobs and not crews.

"*P.S.*—I only wanted to say, not to be afraid of my anti-Napism. I am sure I have the right measure of the man, and I am sure that when Lord Palmerston called him 'a d——d scoundrel,' he said what Lord Derby thinks, and what almost every man of the same station in England feels about him. When the day comes that he will turn upon us, there will be no surprise felt whatever by the great number of *statesmen* in England.

"What of my Yankee paper? It was so *well-timed*, I'm sorry it should be lost.

"What a fiasco the Garibaldians have made of it! They are drunk all day, and it is next to impossible to get them under fire. Poor old Garibaldi is half heartbroken at the inglorious ending of his great career, and no fault of his. For the nation at large it is perhaps the best thing that could happen. Democracy cannot now go on asserting its monopoly of courage."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *July* 18, 1866.

"Our post is so very irregular now that your letter—13th—which should have been with me yesterday, only reached to-day.

"I don't think I am wrong as to Louis Nap. The immense preponderance in Europe that will accrue to Prussia after this war will be heavily felt by him,—for, after all, he has no other hold on Frenchmen than the supremacy he has obtained for France on the Continent.

"I am ashamed to find Lord Stanley falling into

the Whig cant about our 'faithful ally,' &c. Why, the whole world knows that he first traded on the English alliance, and, once assured of her own safety, has spared no means to depreciate English power and disparage her influence in Europe.

"Lord Derby spoke more truthfully and more boldly when he disclaimed all over-close alliance with any nation of Europe, but friendship and good relations with all. The *point* of the speech was aimed at France.

"What the French Emperor wanted to do was to employ Plonplon to mediate between himself and Italy, so that, while seeming to France to be the Great Disposer of Continental destinies, he should not so far insult Italy as to stimulate another Orsini. Plonplon refused: he too aspires to Italian popularity, and is a d——d coward besides. He declined the Italian commission, and would not leave Paris. The Emperor has scores of agents here. Pepoli (step-father of the Hohenzollern hospodar) is always on the watch for him, and keeps him warned, and he has now shown him the necessity of great caution, so that his next move will be well considered before taken.

"The Emperor has never outgrown the Carbonari. Talking of outgrowing, what rot was that of Dizzy's to say England had outgrown the Continent, and hence her grand pacific policy, &c., &c.? If so, why at the instigation of the Continent order 100,000 breechloaders? This was talk for a few old ladies at a social science tea, — not language to be listened to by the world at large.

"How much less adroit was Dizzy, too, than Lord Derby at 'reform.' The plain assertion that it was a measure only to be approached after due and weighty consideration was enough; but Dizzy must go on to say why, if they should touch it, they were the best of all possible reformers. The palpable want of tact reveals in this man how the absence of the true 'gentleman element' can spoil a great intellect.

"And, since I sent off my O'D. on 'The American Alliance,' I have read Lord Derby's speech, full of complimentary things to the Yankees and plainly indicating the wish to draw closer to them. I think my paper will be well-timed—that is, if it has reached you, for I despatched it ten days ago by F. O., and have heard nothing of it since.

"I cannot write to Bulwer, nor indeed to any one, about myself. Three or four of the present Cabinet know me well enough, and what I'm good for; and if they do not improve the acquaintance, it is because they don't want me.

"I own to you I think it hard—d——d hard; but I have grown so used to see myself passed by donkeys, that I begin to think it is the natural thing. If I were not old and pen-weary, with paroxysms of stupidity recurring oftener than is pleasant, and a growing sense besides that these disconnected links of muddle-headedness will one day join and become a chain of downright feebleness,—if not for all this, I say, 'I'd pitch my blind gods to the devil' (meaning Ministers and Secs. of State), and take my stand by the broadsheet,

and trust to my head and my hands to take care of me.

"I like Lord Derby's allusion to Ireland. Let him only discard the regular traders on party,—disconnect himself with the clique who, so to say, farmed out Ireland for the benefit of a party,—and he has a better chance of *governing the country*—I mean real government—than any of his predecessors.

"Spenser ('Fairy Queen' Spenser) once said, 'No people love Justice more than your Irish.' Probably because it was always a rarity. If Lord D. will ignore religious differences,—not ask more than each man's fitness for office, and appoint him,—he will do much towards breaking down that terrible barrier that now separates the two creeds in the island.

"It is lucky for you that I'm at the end of my paper, or you were 'in' for a 'sixteenthly.' But, oh where, and oh where, is my Yankee paper gone? I want the sheets of 'Sir B.' collectively from the part where the last missive ended. I am re-reading and pondering.

"I half suspect my old friend Whiteside must be in some tiff with the Cabinet. He has not resigned, and yet men are canvassing for his seat for the University. It all looks very odd. It may be that he is bargaining for the Chancellorship, which he is certainly *not* fit for. I might as well ask to be Mistress of the Robes,—and old Lefroy will not resign unless his son be promoted to the Bench! And this is the man they accuse of senility and weak intellect!

"How like flunkies, after all, are these great gentlemen when it becomes a question of place. There is a dash of 'Jeames' through Cabinet appointments positively frightful.

"Wasn't it cunning to send Garibaldi where he could do nothing? It was the way they muzzle a troublesome man in the House by putting him on a committee. He (G.) grumbles sorely, says he ought to be in Istria, &c.; but there is always the *dessous des cartes* in this war, and France has had to be consulted or conciliated everywhere."

To Dr Burbidge.

"Villa Morelli, *July* 21, 1866.

"I take shame to myself for not having sooner replied to your kindest of notes and thanked you for all your trouble at Malta; but first of all I was obliged to go to Spezzia, and then came the wondrous turn-out of the Whigs, which has kept me in close correspondence with scores of people,—no other good result, however, having come of the advent of my friends to power.

"Malta, at all events, is out of the question; for though they have got no further than civil messages to me, common report (a common liar, says Figaro) says that I *ought* to get something.

"The war absorbs fortunately thoughts that might under other circumstances have taken a more personal turn, and the war resolves itself pretty much into what that arch scoundrel, L. N., may do next. For the moment he is all but stalemated—that is, he can scarcely move without a

check. If he aid Prussia, it will be to strengthen the great Germany that he dreads, and aggrandise the Power that threatens to be more than his rival. If he assist Austria, it is to throw off Italy and undo the past. If he remain neutral, it is to let France subside into the position of seeing Europe able to do without her.

"The armed intervention which he desired with us and Russia we will have none of. He is, as Bright said of somebody the other day, 'a bad fellow to hunt a tiger with.'

"Now, Prussia was so manifestly in the wrong at first, and had contrived to be so unpopular with us besides, and Bismarck's views were so palpably false and tricky, he could have no sympathy with us at all, — and yet success (that dear idol of Englishmen) has done fully as much as the best principles and the purest ambition could, and we are rapidly becoming Prussian.

"I own that I am extremely Prussian. I see no hope of any barrier against France but a strong-big-ambitious-non-scrupulous Germany.

"Beer-drinking, stolidity, and the needle-gun will do for the peace of Europe more than Downing St. and the homilies of the whole Russell family.

"I have little trust in the F. O. policy of the Conservatives. The theory is, the Tories love a war; and to controvert this we shall be driven to bear more insult under a Tory Government than if we had Bright on the Treasury bench.

"What a fizzle our friends of the Italian fleet present! They said a few days back that they

were in the Tyrol with Garibaldi. He too is not adding to his fame,—but who is in this war? Not La Marmora certainly."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Croce di Malta, Spezzia, *July* 28, 1866.

"I am here in the midst of great excitement, the late sea-fight being to our naval population the most exciting of all topics. If the Admiral Persano were to venture to land at Genoa at this moment, they would tear him in pieces. The more generously minded only call him a coward, but the masses believe him to be a traitor and to have sold the fleet. This, of course, is the sort of falsehood that could only gain currency amongst Italians. It is alleged that in changing from the *Re d'Italia* to the *Affondatore* his flag was never struck on the former, and consequently the whole of the Austrian attack was directed to a vessel where the admiral was supposed to be. As to the *Affondatore*, she was kept out of the action, some say a mile off,—and the terrific losses of ships and men were actually incurred by officers being driven to desperation by the misconduct of their chief.

"The prefect here has just shown me a despatch saying Persano is to be tried by court-martial, and it will require all the skill of Government to get him off, and they may seriously endanger the very monarchy (as he is the personal friend of the king) in the attempt.

"The Austrian artillery went through the iron plating as if it were two-inch plank, and the

Yankee-built ship, the *Re*, was sunk by shot-holes. The *Affondatore*, too (Blackwall built), was riddled, while the Italian guns did positively nothing.

"The Italians certainly fought manfully, and, though beaten, were not dishonoured. As for the Austrians, horrible stories are told of their shooting,—the men struggling in the water and hacking with their sabres the poor fellows who clung to the boats. If these stories were not guaranteed by men of station and character, they would be unworthy of any credit, but I am driven to believe they are not falsehoods.

"I am here sailing and swimming and laying up a store of health and strength to carry me on, *Deo volente*, through the hot late summer of Florence."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *July* 30, 1866.

"I have got (this moment) yours of the 23rd, and the cheque, for which I thank you. 'One way or other,' as Lord Derby says, I am terribly crippled for gilt, and the money came most apropos.

"I am glad you like my views in O'D. I feel sure they are correct. Curiously enough, the O'D. will just fit in with the sentiments declared by Lord Derby, both regarding America and Europe. It is very hard to write patiently of the Italians just now, their exigence rising with every new success of Prussia, totally forgetful of the fact that to the Alliance they have brought nothing as yet but discomfiture and defeat. Every charge of a

Prussian squadron raises their demands, and every Prussian bulletin enlarges their cries for more frontier! What a people! and yet one must not say *a word* of this; one must back them up and wish God-speed and the rest of it, for there is a worse thing, after all, than a bumptious Italy,—an insolent and aggressive France.

"Garibaldi is at his wits' end with the scoundrels they have given him to command. About eighty per cent of them should be at the galley. He is ready to throw up his command any day, and nothing but urgent entreaty induces him to remain.

"There will be great difficulty in getting the Italians to accept a reasonable amount of territory with Venice. They always regard whatever is given generously as something far below their just claim; and if you want to make an Italian cabman miserable, pay him double and be civil at parting, and he will go off with the affecting impression that he *might have* had five times as much out of you if he had only stood to it. I know them well: they are d——d bad Irish—Irish minus all generosity and all gratitude.

"I have come back in great mind after a week's swimming. I believe if I could live at Spezzia I might rival Methuselah."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Aug.* 13, 1866.

"I was very glad to see the part which I now return corrected, fearing that some mischance had befallen it. I hope you like it: I am eager to

hear what your impression of the whole tale is on looking back over it.

"If I thought it was of the least consequence to you I would not dun you, but I want money. I am in a difficulty about a large—that is, for me, a large—bill due on the 25th, the last of those debts I once told you of, and with this I end them.

"I am writing hard at 'Sir B.,' and hope the ending will come right. My home advisers say 'Yes.'

"The character of Mrs Sewell was a great difficulty—that is, the attempt to show how mere gracefulness could appear something better, and that a woman might be as depraved as a man without forfeiting to a great extent our sympathy, and even something stronger.

"Have I succeeded? I don't know, nor do I know if any one will take the trouble to see what I have aimed at.

"I wrote this epigram on the loss of the *Affondatore*, and it has some vogue here:—

"Al Affondatore.

"Tu meritai bene il tuo nome strano,
Se non i nemici: Affonderai Persano.

Or in doggerel—

"To the Sinker.

"You well deserve your name, one must say with candour,—
If you can't sink your enemies you can your own commander.

"I see the Rhine question is the next for 'trial' —the G. L. N. *versus* the King of Prussia. *Nisi Prius.*"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Aug.* 16, 1866.

"The French Emperor is very seriously ill. Nellaton has been sent for, and has given a grave opinion of the case: suspected to be incipient stone in the bladder. He was brought up to Paris from Vichy on a bed. It would be an awkward moment for him to die, for Plonplon would convulse the whole of Europe. Both Germany and Italy are ripe for a great democratic movement. Bismarck will be swamped eventually, or, rather, pooped by the big wave of popular opinion that is now swelling in Germany, and that seems to carry him *on* at this moment.

"As for Italy, all the failures, land and sea, are ascribed to the Government, and the 'Reds' are employing the general discontent to bring the dynasty into disfavour. Fortunately for the king, Garibaldi has done as little as if he were a man of education, otherwise the situation would be critical.

"Who can explain the shameful condition of our fleet? Our passion for experiment is only to be equalled by the man who passed his life speculating what he should do when he met a white bear. I suppose that a great naval disaster would drive the nation half mad, and certainly it is what we are bidding hard for if we do come to a fight. As the only passable Ministry in England is the

one that will reduce taxation, it would be better at once to give up all armaments and pay a policeman (France, for instance) to protect us. We should save some fourteen million annually, and be safe besides."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, *Aug.* 19, 1866.

"You will see by the accompanying chaps. that I am puckering in my purse, and will be able to tell me what you think of the wind-up.

"There is nothing I find so hard in a story as the end. I never can put the people to bed with the propriety that I wish. Some won't come for their night-caps; some won't lie down; and some will run about in their shirts when I want to extinguish the candle. In fact—absurd as it may seem—one's creatures have a will of their own, and the unhappy author of their being is as much tormented by their vagaries and caprices as if they were his flesh-and-blood children going into debt, and making bad matches and the rest of it.

"At all events, read and be critical. It is not yet too late to correct if you dislike the way I am concluding. I, of course, mean to make the lovers happy in my next chapter."

To Mr W. Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, FLORENCE, *Sept.* 1, 1866.

"The best thing the war has done for Italy is the knocking over a score of false gods — that

graven image La Marmora and their clay idol Persano especially. This was, *par excellence*, the land of sham mock heroes, mock statesmen, mock publicists, and mock patriots. Even the engineers were humbugs, for when they made a tunnel for the Lucca railroad they could not make the two sides meet, and went on working in parallel lines till something fell in and showed one where they were!

"To pick your best Bramah with an old nail; to know what you say at your dinner-table without the faintest acquaintance with the language you are talking; to read your thoughts by the expression of your face as you glance at them; and to 'sell' you at every moment and turn of your existence, I'll back them against Europe,—but there end their gifts! For the common work and wear of daily life they are too sharp and too cunning, and you might as well improvise a Cabinet Council from Pentonville or Brixton as make up a Ministry of such materials. But for the love of mercy keep all this to yourself.

"There is a story that Hudson has been offered the Embassy here. Would to God it were true! I'd defy the devil and all his bores with one such fellow in my neighbourhood. There's more champagne in him—dry and sweet—than in all Mme. Cliquot's cellars, and he is as good as he is able and clever.

"The Tories would do more by such an appointment than by gaining ten votes in the House, ay, fifty. I think they seem to use their patronage,

up to this, very wisely: these Irish appointments are certainly good. There is one man of merit they appear to have forgotten, it is true; but I am told he is not impatient, and this is the better for him, as his virtue may probably be put to a long and trying test.

"Do you know Phil Rose of the Carlton? He is coming out to see me here next week. He is sure to have all the Conservative gossip (he used to have all the patronage once, which was better). He once (in '59) offered me an [? Australian post] with £1200 a-year, and gave it, on my refusing, to Ed. Disraeli, Ben's brother. I declined from pure fear. I understood I should have to hold and account for large sums, and as I knew how incapable I was in rendering an account of the few half-crowns entrusted to me, I saw that if I accepted I should probably finish my literary career in the Swan river. Still, I have occasional misgivings at my cowardly rejection, for I might have died before they detected me.

"Do you see that that ungrateful rascal Cook has taken up the hint in my late O'D. and organised an excursion to 'Liberated Venice'?

"Bright, too, has been plagiarising me in his Birmingham speech, in his comparison of the Conservatives with Christy Minstrels. How I chuckled when I saw that he broke down in his attempt at drollery. Write if you have not written. Do you remember Sheridan Knowles' speech about Sanders and Ottley? 'If you, sir, are Mr Sanders, damn Mr Ottley; and if you're Mr Ottley, damn Mr Sanders.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, FLORENCE, *Sept.* 7, 1866.

"I have your note and its enclosure. My apothecary will just take the last, and may the devil do him good with it: I grudge it with all heart. My thanks to you, all the same.

"I am right glad you like 'Sir B.' To tell you truth, I was rather put out at not hearing you say so before, for I thought the last bit good. I am sorry now to know the reason. *You* ill! I'd be shot, if I were *you*, if I'd condescend to be ill. With your comfortable house and your 34 Bordeaux it's downright mean-spirited to be sick. I can imagine an unlucky devil like myself knocked up, because so little does it. Like the Irish on their potato-diet, they are always only a potato-skin above starvation; so fellows like myself are only a hair above hanging themselves. Don't let me hear of your being blue-devilled, or I'll go over to St Andrews and abuse you.

"I send you a short O'D.—which, as Mrs Dodd says, may please the Mammoth of unrighteousness, the press!—on 'Our War Correspondents,' also 'On Bathing Naked.' The last will help to relieve the dryness of politics, in which O'D. has of late indulged much.

"I am not ashamed of 'Sir B.,' and I leave it entirely to yourself to append the name or not. I think Tony was injured by being anonymous, and this had probably better be acknowledged.

"If I could manage it, I'd go over to see Venice on its cession. It would be curious in many ways.

"Do you perceive how L. Nap. is laying by the nest-egg of future discord in Germany, fomenting discontent in all Southern Germany, and exciting the King of Saxony to *defer* accepting terms of peace? Contracts are already taken in Austria to provision the Saxon troops for three months, so that there is no question whatever of their return to Saxony. All this shows clearly enough what *pressure* he means to put upon Prussia—that is to say, how much he intends to gall and goad her. If she resent, she must do something provocative, and that provocation will be all the Emperor needs to stir up French anger, always ready enough to take fire. It is in this way this scoundrel always works,—like the duellists who force the challenge from the other party, that they may have the choice of the weapon!

"I hope to God he won't drive me mad, as my daughters daily tell me, for I can't keep myself from thinking and talking of him. He destroys the comfort of my daily potatoes, and I think my little franc Bordeaux is soured by the thought of him."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Sept.* 24, 1866.

"I am well pleased that you like the wind-up of 'Sir B.' It is always my weak point; and so instinctively do I feel it so, that I fear I shall make a bad ending myself. I half suspect, however, that your praise was a delicate forbearance, and that you really *did* see some abruptness.

Now I have a great horror of being thought prosy. There is something in prosiness that resembles a moral paralysis, and I fear it as I should fear a real palsy.

"I have written a few last words, which I leave to your judgment to subjoin or not. It's well I have wound up the story, for I begin to feel some signs of a return of the attack I had last spring. Perhaps, however, it may pass off without carrying me with it.

"Wolff is here: he dined here yesterday, and made us laugh heartily at his account of the way Labouchere blackguarded him on the hustings at Windsor,—'The knight from the Ionian Islands, whose glittering honours would not be the worse of the horse-pond,' and after this went and dined with him at the 'Star'!

"Wolff has come out with some credit from our people about a great 'robbery' to be done on the Italian Government—a loan of a hundred millions (francs, of course).

"I hear Lord Stanley would give me Venice—the Consul-Generalship—if Perry would resign or die. He has been 'cretinised' these ten years, but idiocy is the best guarantee for longevity. 'The men the gods loved' were clever fellows, and they 'had their reward.' It would be a great boon to me to get a place before I break up,—just as it is a polite attention to offer a lady a chair before she faints.

"If I get upon L. Nap. I shall write you ten

pages, so I forbear, but not until I have screamed my loudest against that stupid credulity with which the English papers accept his circular as 'Peace.' Don't you remember what Swift said to Bickerstaff, when the latter declared he was *not* dead? '*Now* we *know* you are dead, for you never told a word of truth in your life.'

"Did you see that the Cave of Adullam was originally Lincoln's? I have noted eight distinct thefts of Bright, and am half disposed to give them in a paper with the title, 'Blunderings and Plunderings of John Bright.'

"I have taken to gardening,—it's cheaper than whist, and a watering-pot is a modest investment; besides, I feel like a Cockney friend who retired from the gay world and took to horticulture,—'One never can want company who has a hoe and a rake."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Sept.* 29, 1866.

"I have conceived a new story which may, I think, turn out well. I do not wish to do it hurriedly, but if you think it would suit you by the opening of the New Year, I will go on to shape and mould it in my head, and when in a state to do so, send you some pages.

"I can afford to be frank with you, for I think you wish me well. I believe there is some thought of giving me advancement, but even if it come, it will not suffice for my wants, and I must write (at all events) *one more novel.* I trust you understand

me well enough to know that I am not pressing my wares on you, because *I* want to dispose of them, or that if it be your wish or your convenience to say 'No' that it will alter anything in our friendship. You will bear this well in mind in giving me your reply.

"I don't believe I shall do better than 'Sir Brook.' I don't think it is *in* me, but I will try to do as well, and certainly if it is for *you*, I will not do my work less vigorously nor with less heart in it. There is certainly plenty of time to think of all this, but I *think* better and more purposely when the future is, to a certain degree, assured, and my new story will get a stronger hold on me if I know that you too are interested in its welfare."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"FLORENCE, *Oct.* 7, 1866.

"My best thanks for your note and its enclosure. They only reached me last night, though dated 30th, but the mails go by God knows what route now, as the inundations have completely cut the Mont Cenis line. I send off the Nov. 'Sir B.' to-night. There are two or three small corrections which had escaped me. I think if the book be largely known it may succeed. I hope 'The Times' may notice it — is this likely? I shall ask for some copies for a few friends, and my own can be addressed to me under cover to F. Alston, Esq., F. O. My eldest daughter, who went care-

fully over the corrections, says I have done nothing as good. By the way, I have not gone over Sept. and Oct. Nos. See that Sewell is never Walter, always *duelling*, and look well to any other lapses.

"I am all wrong in health, and depressed most damnably. I go down to Spezzia to have a swim or two to try to rally, and I shall take the O'Ds. with me for correction.

"I suspect Perry will not give up Venice, but your friends are asking L. Stanley to give me Havre, which *is* vacant. How kind of you to offer to write to him. I don't like putting you to the bore, but if you come personally in his way, say what you can, or think you can, for me. Havre is worth £700 a-year, and would solace my declining years and decaying faculties. Paralysis is the last luxury of poor devils like myself, but I really can't afford it.

"So Lyons goes Ambassador to Paris. I know him well, and his capacity is about that of a small village doctor. The devil of it is, in English diplomacy the two or three men of ability are such arrant scamps and blackguards, they can't be employed, and the honest men are dull as ditch-water. There is no denying it, and I don't say it because I am dyspeptic,—but we have arrived at Fogeydom in England, and the highest excellence that the nation wants or estimates is a solemn and stolid 'respectability' that shocks nobody with anything new or original, and spoils no digestion by any sudden or unexpected brilliancy.

"The Ionian knight is here with me, full of grander projects than ever Skeff Damer dreamed of. He asked me yesterday if that character had any prototype."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Croce di Malta, Spezzia, *Oct.* 9, 1866.

"I have been here some days swimming and boating, and the sea and sea-air have done wonders for me, making me feel more like a live man than I have known myself these six months.

"I send you by this post the O'Ds. corrected, and herewith a few lines to finish the 'Cable' O'D., which you properly thought needed some completion.

"I go back to-morrow, and hope to find a letter from you. Though I am totally alone here, and have nobody above my boatman to talk to, I leave this with some regret. The beauty of the place and the vigour it gives me are unspeakable enjoyments. It is like a dream of being twenty years younger."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Oct.* 22, 1866.

"I am very grateful for your note on my behalf. You said just the sort of thing that would be likely to serve me, and will, I have no doubt, serve me if opportunity offers. Lord S. has been so besieged on my part by my friends that he will for peace sake be anxious to get rid of me. The difficulty is, however, considerable. The whole Consular service is a beggarly concern, and the only thing

reconcilable about it is when there is, as in my own case, nothing to do.

"The Party were much blamed—and, I suspect, deservedly—for the way in which they are distributing their patronage. It was but last week Havre, with a thousand a-year (consular salary), was given to Bernal Osborne's brother! and two of the private secs. of Cabinet Ministers held office as such under the late Administration. These are blunders, and blunders that not alone alienate friends but confuse councils, since no one pretends to say that these men maintain a strict silence amongst their own party of what they hear and see in their official lives."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 8, 1866.

"You say nothing about the serial, so I conclude your plans are made; but what say you to taking my story to begin your *July volume? That* interval would perhaps take off the air of sameness you seem to apprehend, and it would in so far suit me that I could rest a little just now, which is perhaps the best thing I could do. Say if this will suit you.

"I was greatly tempted to go to Venice, so many of my friends went; but I was too low in many ways, and so resisted all offers.

"Send me some money. The Florence tradesmen, in their religious fervour, anticipate Xmas by sending in their bills before December, and in this way they keep me blaspheming all Advent.

"I hope to hear some good news of 'Sir Brook,' —if, that is to say, good news has not cut with me, which I half begin to suspect.

"What do you say to the Pope's allocution? It appears to me *son dernier mot.* By the way, why did your political article last month pronounce so positively against any Reform Bill, when it is quite certain the Government will try one? Would not the best tactic of party be now to declare that the only possible reform measure could come from the Tories? that, representing, as they do, the nation more broadly as well as more unchangeably, their bill would be more likely to settle the question for a longer term of years than any measure conceived in the spirit of mere party,—and I would like to show that it is the spirit of party, of even factious party, that is animating the Whigs.

"Universal suffrage in Australia has proved an eminently Conservative measure. What we have to bear most in England is not *great* change so much as *sudden* change. We can conform to anything, but we need time to suit ourselves to the task.

"I suspect that the moderate Whigs have no intention of joining the Conservatives. There is, first of all, the same disgrace attaching to a change of seat in the House as in a change of religion. Nobody hesitates to think that a convert must be either a knave or a fool; and, secondly, the Whigs do not apprehend danger as *we* do: they do not think Democracy either so near or so perilous. Which of us is right, God knows! For my own part, perhaps my stomach has something

to say to it. I believe we have turned the summit of the hill, and are on our way downward as fast as may be.

"America is wonderfully interesting just now. It is a great problem at issue, and never was popular government submitted to so severe a test. If Johnson goes on and determines to beard the Radicals, he will be driven to get up a row with England to obtain an army. They will vote troops readily enough for *that*,—*reste à savoir* against whom he will employ them.

"I am glad to see Lord Stanley appointing a Commission to consider the Yankee claims. There is nothing so really good in parliamentary government as the simple fact that a new Cabinet may undo the very policy they once approved of, and thus the changeful fortunes of the world may be used to profit, instead of accepted as hopeless calamities."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Nov.* 16, 1866.

"I would have delayed these proofs another day in the hope of hearing from you, as I am so anxious to do, but that the Queen's Messenger leaves this evening for England, and I desire to catch him as my postman.

"I send you an O'D. on the Pope, and, curiously enough, since I wrote it I have found that Lord Derby's instructions to Odo Russell are in conformity with the line I take, being to make the Pope stay where he is.

"We were to have had great Department changes, but they are all *tombées dans l'eau*, at least for the present. Lyons was to have gone to Paris *vice* Cowley, and Hudson come back here, but the Queen will not permit the Princess of Wales, on her visit to the Exhibition, to go to a bachelor's house! L. Lyons has no wife. Why they don't send him an order through F. O. to marry immediately I don't know, but I can swear if the command came from the head of a department he'd have obeyed before the week was over."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"VILLA MORELLI, *Dec.* 16, 1866.

"I return the proof, which by our blundering post office only reached me last night. I have added a short bit to the Pope, and also the Fenians. I'm sure you will agree with me as to Ireland; what we want is something like a continuous policy—something that men will be satisfied to see being carried out with the assurance that it will not be either discouraged or abandoned by a change of Government. We want, in fact, that Ireland should be administered for Ireland, and not for the especial gain or loss of party.

"My wife is a little better, and was up for a few hours yesterday. I suppose there is not much the matter with myself beyond some depression and a little want of appetite, but I know I'm not right, for I feel no enjoyment in whist.

"It is d——d hard that 'Fossbrooke' has been so

little noticed. 'Pall Mall' and 'Athenæum' are very civil, and my private 'advices' say I have done nothing equal to it. I know I am pretty sure never to do so again. If I had had time, I would have liked to have written a long paper on Ireland and its evils. I believe I have lived long enough *in* Ireland to know something of the country, and long enough *out* of it to have shaken off the prejudice and narrowness that attach to men who live at home—and I suspect I am a 'wet' Tory in much that regards Ireland, though not the least of a Whig in this or anything else. My O'D. will, however, serve as a pilot balloon, and if it go up freely we can follow in the same direction.

"If you see any notices, I am perfectly indifferent if civil or the reverse, of 'Sir B.,' send them to me, and tell if you hear of any criticism from any noticeable quarter.

"I am sure you are right as to some ill-feeling towards me of the London press, though I cannot trace it to any distinct cause. If I had lived amongst them I am well aware they might hate me roundly, but I have not,—I have all my life been abroad, and never knew Grub St. That the fact is so I have a strong suspicion, and certainly 'Tony Butler,' anonymous, fared better till they began to discover [who wrote it]."

XVII.

FLORENCE AND TRIESTE.

1867.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *Feb.* 6, 1867.

"Up to this I have no tidings about the Queen's Speech, and am as much in doubt as ever what the Government means. One thing I feel sure: if they do not propose some measure of reform, they are done for as a *Party;* and if they do, they are done for as a *Ministry.* Reform is a dose that will always kill the doctor that prescribes it.

"But there are graver mischiefs abroad. A great European war is coming, and I see already signs that the Yankees have their task assigned them by Russia, and which will immensely complicate the coming struggle. Jonathan is to sympathise with the distressed Cretans: he is to come into the war as a philanthropist, but it is a philanthropist with a six-shooter!

"I send you three short O'Ds. If the month is propitious I may find bones for another. Send me (if you have them) the rejected ones: I think

I could transfuse blood into them and revive them. It is important that they should not be all political, and it is often hard to find a new social evil, particularly for a man laid up like myself, and not street-walking. You will see, without my telling it, that I am not myself. I am far from well, and my spirits, that I always thought would have gone on with me to the end, are flagging.

"There will be a strong session, and no quarter given or taken. How I envy the fellows that are in it. If men really wanted to see what the effect of numerical representation is, they ought to look at the French and Italian Chambers,—the one a closely packed crowd of Ministerial followers, the other a set of jobbing hounds representing neither the intelligence, the property, nor the enterprise of the country. The proprietary of Italy is scarcely seen in the Chamber, and the Parliament has neither credit with the country nor influence over it. One of Garibaldi's ill-spelled silly proclamations is more law in the land than all that passes the House.

"I hope the Ministry will declare they want no measures of severity in Ireland, and will have the pluck to restore the Act of Habeas Corpus and give the lie to the Kimberley fabrication. I don't say Ireland is sound, but she is no sicker than she ever was. As to the Established Church in Ireland, I am convinced that they who urge its destruction are less amicably disposed towards the Catholics than that they hate the Protestants. They always remind me of what Macaulay said of

the Puritans, who put down bear-baiting not because it was cruel to the bear, but because it amused the people.

"There are many in Ireland who think that to abolish the Church would at once cut the tie that attaches Ireland to England. I myself think it would weaken it. There was assuredly a time in which, if Protestants could only have been assured that their religion would be respected, they would have joined O'Connell in Repeal. Though too loyal and too self-respecting to make outcry upon it, the Protestants in Ireland are far from thinking they are fairly dealt with."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Feb.* 17, 1867.

"The short month compels me to beg you will look closely to these in proof, as I cannot hope to see them. I am 'off the hook,' but I wrote these last O'Ds. *di cuôre*, as I feel, especially in the Irish affair, the Cabinet is wrong.

"I am not sure of my appointment, but I believe it will take place. I was only waiting for certainty to tell you, well aware of your kind feeling for me. It is not a 'big bird,' but, after all, I only shoot with a popgun.

"The Irish judge, Keogh, who tried the Fenians, dined with me yesterday. He has come abroad by special leave to escape the *risque* of assassination with which he was menaced."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Feb.* 20, 1867.

"I write a mere line to say that I have this morning received my appointment to Trieste, and from all I hear of the climate, society, and place itself, I am fortunate. It is only eighteen hours by rail from this.

"In my last proof I corrected 'La Marmora' wrong: it should be 'La Marmora' (as it stood before I changed it). The Italian newspapers, however, spell it both ways.

"I intend to ask for a leave till May, since it would be dangerous to move my wife in bad or broken weather; so that if you should visit Paris (I mean, of course, you and Mrs B.), there is still time to come over to Florence before we leave it, and I hope that you may manage it.

"The promotion was made with great courtesy, and if I have not got a big slice of the pudding, I have been certainly 'helped' with all possible politeness.

"I suspect Dizzy has made a sad mull of his 'resolutions.' It is, however, hard to say what conditions his own friends may have imposed. At all events, if the Government be allowed to carry a bill, it will be to get rid of a troublesome measure and a party together. They will permit the horse to win, with the condition that the race shall break him down for ever.

"I scribble this hurriedly; but I knew you would like to hear I was safe out of the ship, even though it be only in a punt.

"Italy is going clean to the devil. It will be soon the choice between a Despotism or a Republic. Parliamentary government they never did understand, but so long as Cavour lived he made the nation think it was a Parliament ruled them,—and, stranger again, the Parliament itself believed so too!"

To Mr Alexander Spencer.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Feb.* 21, 1867.

"As I know of no one who will be more pleased to hear of any piece of good fortune having befallen me than yourself, I write this to tell you that the Government have given me the Trieste Consulship. It is one of the best in all respects—worth at present £700 a-year, and with fair prospect of being increased. The place itself, climate, people, and position are all that I could desire. The way the thing was done was most courteous, and as Spezzia is to be abolished, it is clear that both my last and my present post were specially created to serve me.[1]

"Of course I am very glad to have some of the pressure of eternal authorship taken off my shoulders, for I can easily, by O'Dowd and such

[1] Dr Fitzpatrick (on the authority of Mr Whiteside—afterwards Lord Chief-Justice) makes the statement that Lord Derby exclaimed, "We must do something for Harry Lorrequer." Also, that in offering him the appointment, Lord Derby said, "Here is £600 a-year for doing nothing; and you, Lever, are the very man to do it." It does not seem probable that Lever would have considered the somewhat cynical observations attributed to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as being exceptionally polite or exceptionally courteous.—E. D.

like discursive things, double my income without calling upon me for the effort of story-writing.

"I might have had something higher and more remunerative if I had been disposed to go farther away, but my wife's health and my own inclination to keep in this part of Europe (only eighteen hours by rail from where I am) decided me to take Trieste.

"It is not, of course, without regret we leave the city we have lived twenty years in; and I believe I am not deceiving myself if I say that we shall be regretted here, for we have a large acquaintance, and are almost Florentine. Still, it would be madness to refuse such an offer and the security it gives that when my hand and head get more wearied I shall yet be able to live, and, like the princess in the fairy tale, only 'kill mice' for my amusement."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *March* 6, 1867.

"I send you the Fenians altered—and, I hope, for the better. As the Government *have* called for the New Powers, there is no need to deplore their omitting to do so, and the paper will not read the worse that it does not censure them.

"I have thought over what you suggested about Gladstone,—but it would be too personal, and I hate him too much to trust myself to speak of him individually. As for the charm of his manner—his fascination, &c.,—I think it is about the most arrant humbug I know. Joseph Surface, with a

strong Lancashire burr, is the impression he left upon *me*.

"What a precious fiasco the Tories have made of their bill. Like the Chinese with the plum-pudding, they forgot to tie the bag, and all the ingredients have got loose in the pot. I see Lord Cranborne and Peel have left them. Both are losses, but it matters little how the crew is to muster when the ship is among the breakers.

"I set off for my post immediately, and hope that a new place, new situation, and new people may rally me out of my dreariness. Austrian politics, like Scotch law, confound one by the very names they give things; and I lose all pleasure in a trial when the plaintiff is called the 'Promovent'! I know it will be many a day before I resign myself to believe that 'Reichsrath' means a council: it looks and sounds so like a tonic bitter. Still, I am going in for a strong acquaintance with Austria and Austrians, and mean to give up Italy when I cross the frontier.

"If Newdigate had not been such a good fellow I'd have liked to have quizzed him about his absurd speech concerning the Irish Catholics. It is hard to understand men so imbued with prejudice and yet mixing with the world. And as to Cardinal Cullen's red stocking, why, good God! have we not seen the West Kent Rifles or the Dorset Fusiliers strutting about Paris in knickerbockers and cross belts, and there was no more thought of imitation in the one case than Papal supremacy in the other. Rome derives immense power and prestige from our

unreasonable jealousy of her influence. The Prussians are far wiser: they ignore all cause of offence altogether, and outflank the priests in this way."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Hôtel de la Petre, Trieste, *March* 24, 1867.

"Your packet with proof followed me to Vienna, into Hungary, and at length caught me here this morning—I need not say, too late for correction. I have had what Yankees call 'a fine time,' and talked myself hoarse in strange tongues; but I have seen strange men and cities, and, on the whole, filled my head while emptying my pocket. I have stories for you when we meet, and I trust that might be soon.

"As to my new post—*keep the confession purely to yourself*—it is unpleasant, damnable. There is nothing to eat, nothing to drink, nothing to live in, no one to speak to. Liverpool, with Jews and blacklegs for gentlemen—*voilà tout.*

"It was a veritable leap in the dark, and I hesitated long whether it might not be best to pitch it to the devil who made it and go on penny-a-lining to the end; but Lord Bloomfield, our Ambassador at Vienna, who really took to me, persuaded me to hold on for a while at least, and I have *asked* for, and *got*, three months' leave, during which time I must either try and get some change or poison myself.

"All this avowal—made, as you may believe, neither willingly nor pleasantly—is made to you alone of all my friends, for I am heartily ashamed

of myself for getting into such a scrape and talking rather mysteriously about my good-luck, &c., which is pretty much like a man's boasting at being transported for life. Trieste means no books, no writing, no O'D., no leave nor go of any kind, but moral death, and d——n too."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *April* 6, 1867.

"I got back here last night late to find your note, and I may own that I never 'touched' money that didn't belong to me with more pleasure than your cheque, plucked by innkeepers and cleared out by whist as I have been while away.

"Only think of my going to see Flynn in prison at Venice! I hope I'll be able some day to give you an account of our meeting. I have taken charge of the scoundrel's petition for pardon, and believe I shall succeed in obtaining it, though what society is to gain by his liberation is more a matter for speculation than hope; but I am really curious to know what resources of knavery he has in his budget, all the more since his rival swindler, L. Napoleon, would seem at the end of *his* rogueries, and stands fully exposed and found out by all Europe. I saw some most astounding correspondence of his on the Mexican affair, and it will be published one of these days.

"I'll go over 'The Fenian' the moment I am rested. Now my hand is shaking terribly, and I am a good deal fatigued.

"Trieste was a fatal blunder of mine. If you

could hear of [any one who] would exchange with me, put him in 'relations' at once: I'll pay liberally the 'difference.'

"Of course I was not in London, though I read I was, in a Scotch paper. I hope you and Mrs B. will not let May go over without a run to Paris and a peep at us here. It would be a great pleasure to see you.

"I am, as you may believe, very down in the mouth about my move. I feel as might a vicar leaving a snug parsonage to become bishop in the Cannibal Islands."

To Mr Alexander Spencer.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *May* 7, 1867.

"I suspect my Trieste appointment is a bit of a white elephant. There will be a great deal to do, a large staff necessary, and the place is generally costly to live in. In fact, I believe it would have been fully as well for me to have retained my humble post at Spezzia, where, if I received little, I did less. But I was tired of being a country mouse, and began to fancy that I had a right to some more generous diet than hard peas.

"My poor wife has gone back sorely in health. I have many causes for uneasiness, but this is the worst of all."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, *June* 18, 1867.

"I enclose you the proof and a few pages to wind up 'The Adieu.'

"You will see ere long that I am right about L. Nap. He means to play us a slippery trick about the East. He bamboozled us into the Crimean War, and he is now going to juggle us out of its small benefits.

"My wife is at last a little better. I got to bed last night after twelve nights of half-sleep on the sofa. I am fairly knocked up, and for this and other reasons do look to the proof, and don't trust me.

"You have heard that Elliott has been appointed Ambassador to Constantinople. He is about the greatest ass in diplomacy,—a big word when one remembers Loftus at Berlin and Howard at Munich. Here is an epigram I made on his appointment :—

> "F. O. is much puzzled, we all have heard recently,
> To find proper Envoys to send to each Court;
> And while Lyons at Paris may get along decently,
> We rejoice to hear Elliott *est mis à la Porte.*"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"British Consulate, Trieste, *July* 2, 1867.

"Though my cry, like the starling's, is still 'I can't get out,' I exist in the hope that I am not to be left to die here.

"I send you a short bit on Miramar that I hope you may like. I'll follow it with something lighter, but I send this now to acknowledge your note and its eighteen-pounder (a shot in my locker that told with considerable effect). I see you will not pity me for being sentenced to this d——d place, but if

you only saw the faces of the Shylocks you'd be more compassionate. If nothing else offer, I'll try and negotiate an exchange with Flynn. I'll be shot if there must not be something amongst the convicts more companionable than here."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Villa Morelli, Florence, *Sept.* 5, 1867.

"I am passing my last few days at the Villa Morelli, and mean to leave for good—if that be the phrase for it—on Monday next. My wife is still very ill, and very unfit for the fatigue of a journey; but short of giving up my post, I have no alternative. I hoped to have heard from you before I wrote, but as I have a quiet half hour—not a very frequent thing with me of late—I sit down to inflict it on you. I wish, besides, to ask and learn from you—shall you want me seriously next year,—that is, do you care to have a novel from me any time about April or May next? I am driven to ask this because I have had a proposal which, if you want me, I shall certainly not accept, nor am I sure I shall even in the other alternative.

"I am always hoping that each book I write will be my last; and if it were not that I have taken (mentally) as many farewells as Grey, I'd say this new and not-a-bit-the-less-on-that-account-much-to-be-thought-over story would be my final curtsey to an indulgent public.

"It seems to me you won't believe in a war in

England. It is part of the national hypocrisy to cry peace while our neighbours are whetting their knives and polishing their breechloaders. War is certain, nevertheless—as sure as the devil is in hell and I am a consul!—two facts so apparently alike, it seems tantalising to mention them.

"We are in for a little war of our own, meanwhile, with the African savage,—perhaps to serve as an excuse for not taking part in the bigger fight near home. This policy reminds me of an old Irish squire who, being a bad horseman, always excused himself when the hounds met near him by saying 'he was off for a rat-hunt.'

"The next Glasgow steamer that leaves Trieste will bring you a few bottles of Maraschino, which, as Cattaro is one of my dependencies, will be real. I wish I could think I'd see you sip a glass with me one of these days beside the blue Adriatic."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 18.

"It is not now I need tell you what a miserable hand I am at correcting a proof. The man who has never been able, after fifty odd years' experience of his own nature, to correct one of his own faults, can scarcely have much success in dealing with his printers'. Look, therefore, to this for me, and let me come decently before the public. I have added a bit to Garibaldi's which is certainly *true*, whatever men may think of it in England.

"I am afraid I am not equal to a notice (a

worthy notice) of Aytoun. I never knew [him] personally, and I suspect it should be one who did should now recall his fine traits of heart as well as of intellect. All I know of him I liked sincerely.

"I abhor Cockneydom as much as you do! Without being a Fenian, I have an Irishman's hate of the Londoner.

"Only think of what a lucky dog I am! All our clothes, &c., coming from Florence have been shipwrecked in the Adriatic. They were sent from Ravenna, and the craft was wrecked off Pola. I must make an O'D. of it!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Consulate, Trieste, *Nov.* 16, 1867.

"Thanks for your note and its enclosure.

"You are mistaken if you think I invented the Nobility Association, or that it is a hoax. It is *bonâ fide*, every bit of it; and I have added a note which you can insert if you suspect that your own incredulity may be felt by others.

"I have added a page also to 'Garibaldi.' It is, to my mind, so essential to a right reading of the present position of Italy to place briefly the whole incident before the reader, that I think it now will display events as they have been, as they might have been, and as they are.

"To comply with your wish to return proof by post, I have, I fear, corrected laxly; but you will, I know, look to my 'shortcomings.'

"I suspect Serjeant Brownlow's reminiscences

would make an amusing review. If you think so, send it to me, and I'll try.

"My wife is again very ill, a relapsed [ ] of the lung, and I am dreary—dreary."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Dec.* 2.

"I send you for your New Year No. the best magazine story I think I ever wrote.

"I only hope you may agree with me,—at all events you will tell me what you think of it, and let me have early proof."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"British Consulate, Trieste, *Dec.* 6, 1867.

"I return you 'Bob Considine,' hurriedly, but I hope effectually, corrected. I sincerely hope it may appear New Year's Day: I have a superstition of a good start on that day.

"Your note contained no cheque, and I suppose you may have found it on your table since, but you can annex it to 'Bob' when you write.

"We are going to have a mournful spectacle here—the funeral reception of the poor Mexican Emperor's remains. It will be, they say, very solemn and imposing.

"I find I could not improve the wind-up, and left it unchanged. As to how mad Bob turned out afterwards is nothing to either of us, though I own I think the case hazardous.

"A happy Xmas to you and your wife. Give

her all my best wishes and warm regards; as for me,—

> "The time of mince-pies, misletoe, and buns,
> The time that tells of all that bright and neat is,
> Only brings thoughts of Xmas bills and duns,
> Confounded chilblains and my old bronchitis.

"This short month drives me close to time, or I should have liked to add something to the Persano sketch. I find it is a subject immensely talked of by our people (sailors) at home, and that opinion is more favourable to him in England than in Italy. There is no time, however, for this now.

"I suspect Dizzy's plurality of votes scheme is utter failure. A Bill of Reform must be simple, even at the cost of some efficiency in details. It is a weapon to be used by coarse hands—and every day of the week besides.

"I have heard nothing more about myself since I wrote. I suppose it is all right, but I know nothing.

"Did I tell you that I met Gladstone here? I don't think I ever saw a more consummate actor,—what the French call *poseur*,—with all the outward semblance of perfect indifference to display and complete forgetfulness of self. Even Disraeli himself is less artificial."

To Dr Burbidge.

"Trieste, *Dec.* 20, 1867.

"I have been planning I don't know how many letters to you, as I wanted, *imprimis*, to have a

consultation with you about literaries, books to be written, &c., but so many *pros* and *cons* got into the controversy I saw it must be talked, not written. Then came on a severe cold, lumbago, &c., and so time slipped over, and I half fancied that I had written and was awaiting your answer. This was stupid enough; but remember where I am living, and with *what*.

"Of all the dreary places it has been my fate to sojourn in, this is the very worst. There are not three people to be known; for myself, I do not know one. English are, of course, out of the question. Even as a novelist I could make nothing out of the stoker and engineer class. Then as for all the others, they are the men of oakum, hides, tallow, and tobacco, who are, so far as I can guess, about on a par with fourth-rate shopkeepers in an English provincial town. The place is duller, the tone lower, the whole social atmosphere crasser and heavier than I could have believed possible in a town where the intelligence to make money exists so palpably.

"My 'leap in the dark' has cost me dearly, for, as Paddy says, I have only gained a loss by coming here. Even as it is, if my wife's health admitted of moving I'd pitch it up to-morrow and run away —anywhere—ere softening of the brain came on as the sequela of hardening of the heart.

"I write with great difficulty, or, rather, with a daily increasing repugnance to writing. 'Bramleighs' you recognise, I suppose: I'll own the paternity when it is full grown. And I am scrib-

bling odd papers, O'Dowderies, and others, but all without zest or pleasure. They are waifs that I never look after when they leave me; and this has Trieste done for me!

"What are you doing yourself? and how is Malta? There must surely be some congenial people in it.

"How miserably the Italians lost their opportunity in not backing up Garibaldi and making Rome their own at once! and now the great question—Will the country wait? will the Constitutional party be able to move with half steam on, and still steer the ship? I firmly believe in war, but all my friends in England disagree with me: they talk of bankruptcy, as if the length of the bill ever baulked any man's appetite.

"I don't think I understood you aright in your last. Is it that I ought to wind up the O'Dowd and start a new shaft, or do you encourage going on? I am equal to either fortune. Of the two, it is always easier for me to lay a new foundation than put a roof on an old building. Give me your advice, and as freely as may be, for I hold much to it."

XVIII.

TRIESTE.

1868.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Jan.* 3, 1868.

"IMMENSE preparations are being made here for the reception of the remains of the Emperor of Mexico, to arrive on the 15th. It will be a very grand and solemn affair.

"I think the squib I enclose will please you. It is in the form of a letter from M. M'Caskey to a Fenian colonel, showing what ought and ought not to be the Fenian strategy. The main point is, however, to lay stress on the necessity of ascribing all brutalities to the Government."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Jan.* 6, 1868.

"Your note and enclosure, though delayed by the snow in Styria, reached me all safely yesterday. Your hearty words of good cheer dallied me out of a blue-devilism that is more often my companion nowadays than some fifteen or twenty years ago.

"I am sincerely glad you liked 'B. C.' I sent it to you because I really thought it good—I mean, for the sort of thing it pretends to be.

"I hope you will like 'M'Caskey': it may need a little retouching, but not much. I send you some O'Ds., and if I live and do well I'll try a story for March No. I have a sort of glimmering notion of one flitting across me now.

"We are here in the midst of *crêpe* and black cloth, and for poor Maximilian, whose body is to arrive this week. What a blunder of our people not to send a ship to the convoy, as the French have done. We have no tact of this kind, and lose more than you would believe by the want of it."

To Mr John Blackwood.

[Undated.]

"The Russians, people think here, will open the ball next spring by pushing the Montenegrins to a rupture with the Turks, and thus opening an opportunity for themselves to come in. Prussia is then to cross the Maine, and the rest to follow.

"Then of course the programme of those who, like myself, are 'Know-nothings'—— But it is, at least, *vraisemblable.*

"I am convinced we ought to resort to conscription, and the time is fit for it. Now that you have given the masses privileges, let them assume duties. So long as you denied them the suffrage, you pretended to govern them and for them. Now the system is changed: *they* have

taken the responsible charge of the State, and its first duty is defence.

"What hatfuls of money Dickens is making in America! I am half persuaded I could do the 'trick' too, but in another way.

"Give my warmest and best regards to your wife, and all my good wishes for the 'year time' (if the word be English).

"Have you seen Patton's book—the ugly side of human nature? My youngest daughter made a very clever review of it, and, I believe, burnt it after."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Jan.* 16, 1868.

"Though I did not fully concur in your view of M'C.'s letter, I have made such emendations and additions as will make the sarcasm thin enough to appeal to you.

"I still think it is the best squib I have done.

"Trusting that you will now be of my mind, and that my codicils, &c., may come in aright.

"I have just returned from attending the ex-Emperor's funeral,—four mortal hours in a uniform on a mule, with a fierce north-easter and a High Mass!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Jan.* 28, 1868.

"'God only knows who has the ace of diamonds!' I once heard a pious whist-player ex-

claim at the last trick of the game. In the same devotional spirit I am tempted to say, 'God only knows what has become of certain O'Ds. that I sent you on the 6th of the month!' Never mind. Herewith goes a story which, if not as rattling, is, I think, better *reading* than the last. May you think so!

"Did you read in 'The Times'—an extract from 'The Globe'—an account of Maximilian's funeral? It was written by my youngest daughter, aged eighteen, and I think very creditably done. I wish I may see her hand in 'Maga' before I die."[1]

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Feb.* 8, 1868.

"I suppose I wrote 'oats' as Sir Boyle did 'gout'—because he could not spell 'rheumatism.' I only saw the blunder myself a couple of days ago. As to 'M'Caskey,' I am not often wedded to my own opinion of my own things, but I declare I still think it a telling squib, and that no earthly man could avoid seeing that it meant sarcasm, not seriousness. Your *first* impression, I am sure, has affected your judgment of the 'revised code'; but at all events I am determined not to lose it, so if you say no, don't let me lose the opportunity of giving it to the world while the subject is the uppermost one in men's thoughts.

[1] Sidney Lever (Mrs Crafton Smith) was the author of a volume of verses entitled 'Fireflies,' which was published in 1883. She also wrote a story entitled 'Years Ago,' which appeared in 1884. She died in London in 1887.—E. D.

"I firmly believe it would be a great success. Bowes, the correspondent of 'The Standard,' to whom I read it, said he thought it *better fun* than any in O'Dowd.

"Strangely enough, the same post that brings me your discounted view of O'Dowd brings me a note from Dr Burbidge, the head of the Malta College, in which he says—— But I will just send you his note, and not garble it by quoting, so I send it in its integrity.

"The Irish Church is doomed. The only question is not who is to use the crowbar, but how to get out of the way when the edifice is falling. It will certainly crush more than the parsons."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Feb.* 28, 1868.

"The enclosed portrait will show you that the gentleman who took Ninco Nanco for Victor Emanuel, as recorded by C. O'Dowd, did not make an unpardonable mistake. I saw it in a shop this morning, and was so amused by what I feel to be a corroboration of my story that I could not help sending it to you. The king makes a far better brigand than a sovereign, and looks every inch a highwayman.

"I have been wondering at your long silence, and fearing all sorts of disasters to a story I sent you a full month ago; but I take it you have been dining out, and talking Scotch reform, and distribution, and education, and Ireland, and Abyssinia,

and forgetting me and all about me,—and very natural, all things considered. I do envy you a bit of London life—as a refresher: not that I crave to live there always, but to go occasionally. To go and be treated as they do treat a stranger who does not bore them too often is very agreeable indeed.

"The world is in a strange lull just now, but the wise people say that France is making immense preparations, and certainly her agents are buying up not only all the corn in Egypt, but all the horses in Hungary. Here they are disarming lazily and honestly. B[eust] avows that he has no thought of attempting to reconquer the lost position of Austria, accepts defeat fairly, and will try to make profit out of disaster by turning the nation to internal questions—to wise reforms and prudent economies. It sounds very sensible, and people seem to believe it too.

"The position of Italy is very critical,—so much so that, if L. Nap. were to die now, it would be an even chance that the whole edifice would come down with a run, and the old Bourbons and priests be as they were. It was by the public opinion of Europe the United Italy was made, and the Italians have exerted themselves manfully to disgust the world of all the good impressions in their favour, and show how little they deserved their luck. All security in Europe is gone. No man dares to prophesy what's coming; but that great events are brewing, and great changes, none can doubt. As to alliances, too, everything is

uncertain. It is like the cotillion, where any one may walk off with his neighbour's partner; and one wouldn't be surprised to see France dancing with Russia ere the ball breaks up.

"I am far from easy about the state of our relations with America, for though a great majority of the educated men there like England, and would abhor a rupture, the masses have a furious desire to wound our national honour, and would do anything to inflict a stain upon us. We ought to have sent them a duke, or at least a marquis, as Minister."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *March* 3, 1868.

"I was glad to get your note. I could not imagine what had become of you, and was searching the papers to see had the Queen sent for you, and then speculating whether you'd offer *me* a bishopric, or, like Sancho, the governorship of an island. God help me, I believe I am fit for nothing better!

"I'd do Dizzy, but it would be flunkeyism in *me* just now. It would be such a palpable bid for a place; and though I'd like to be 'in Lunacy,'—I mean a Commissioner of that ilk,—I'd not like to 'compass it.'

"I'd far rather review Kinglake; but just because I like both the man and his books, I shrink from it. First of all, I am away from all sources of information here; and though I might gather books about me, I could not command what would

be more essential still—the corrective power of personal intercourse. It would grieve me sincerely to do him badly, and I could by no means say that I could do him well. Just in proportion as I hold his opinions about the Emperor, and think that he —Kinglake—alone understands this man and has had the courage to avow his opinion, I am afraid that my very partisanship might damage where I meant to serve, and prejudice what I would rather uphold. It is with great reluctance I decline what has immense attractions for me.

"I cannot forgive you not printing 'M'Caskey.' Posterity never will pardon it, and my literary executor shall devote a full page to abuse of you in his behalf.

"By all means give 'Thornton' this month, but the O'Ds. I now send I am even more anxious about, especially the Irish one. I *know* if they give way to the tinkers they'll spoil the kettle. Of course I can speak without a tinge of prejudice. I feel as judicially important as a Judge in Equity, but I *do* think the No. of Mag. without me has a want of flavour, even though the flavour be that of lemon-juice.

"I have a half hope of going over to England after Easter. Shall you be there? I'd like a dinner with you at the Burlington. Hech, sirs! it stirs my blood to think how gay I could be—gout, debts, and all 'in no wise to the contrary, nevertheless, notwithstanding.'

"Why won't they (by way of young blood in the Administration!) make me Under Secretary,

F. O. ? I know more of the Continent and foreign questions than the whole lot of them.

"They have a line of character in French theatricals they call 'grand utilities.' What a splendid thing it would be to introduce it into political life. I think I'll make an O'Dowd on it, and recommend Cornelius himself to the Premier's notice. From Tipperary to Taganrog is a wide sweep, and I'd engage to 'talk' anything from Pat to Panslavisms. If you see Stanley, mention it.

"Did I tell you Russell—I mean 'The Times' man — wrote to me in great glorification about 'Only an Irishman.'

"My very warmest regards to Mrs Blackwood. If I live and do well—that is, get leave and a little cash—I'll go over and give them myself."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *March* 16, 1868.

"It *was* L. N. who first suggested ironclad gunboats to be employed against the Russian batteries; and as for his courage, you'll get no one on the Continent to believe it except M. Persigny and Madame Walerothy. He is the Post pump-man *par excellence.*

"As you and your wife have left town, I have lost much of the wish to go over.

"I quite agree with you that the tone of condescension employed by the press towards Dizzy is disgusting in the extreme; but my hands are tied, by the position I am in, from saying how highly I think of him. I know nothing of his

honesty, nothing at all of his nature; but his ability is unquestionably above the other men's. His great want is a total deficiency in all genial elements. He attaches no one, and he is incapable of understanding the uses of those traits which made Palmerston and Lord Melbourne the idols of their party.

"Thank God, Gladstone has still less of these endearing qualities! But still I think our friends will have a short lease of Whitehall, and (unlike Pat) no claim for their improvements when they are evicted."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *April* 6, 1868.

"First of all, I hope you are about to print my short story this month. I'm sure you'll like it when in type, and I want to see it there.

"Secondly, what would you say to an Irish tale, a serial, a story of modern—that is, *recent*—Ireland, as opposed to the old Erin, with all its conflicting agencies of Tory and Whig, radical, rebel, and loyalist, dashed with a something of that humour that even poverty and famine have not exhausted, without a bit of sermonising or anything at all 'doctrinaire'? I think I could put many strong truths forcibly forward, and insinuate much worth consideration and reflection; and if I could also make an amusing story, it would be like Mary Jones' Alphabet in Gingerbread — 'Learning to the *taste* of the Public.'

"Of course, I do not mean this at once, but after

some months of plan, plot, and perhaps a visit to the Land of Bog as a refresher. Now say, would it not do *you* good?—as I feel it would do *me*. I believe I have *one* more effort in me, and I don't think I have two; but I'd like to give myself the chance of finishing creditably, and I own to you your monthly criticism and comments are a stimulus and a guide that, in my remoteness from life and the world, are of great value to me. However, make your decision on this or other grounds. If it would be of service to the Mag., *you* know and *I* do not.

"I am flattered by your repetition of the offer about Kinglake, just as I should feel flattered if a man asked me to ride a thoroughbred that had thrown the last three or four that tried him. I believe if I went to London I should say 'yes,' because I could there have books and men, and K. himself, whom I know sufficiently to speak with in all freedom. I can always have a month's leave, but there are difficulties of various kinds. However, the *prospect* of the review forms now a strong element in my wish to go over. If *you* had been at the Burlington I'd decide on going at once.

"The attack of Gladstone is on a false issue. He assails the Church on the ground of its anomalies, which no one desires to leave unredressed, and is about as logical in advising extinction as a doctor would be that recommended poisoning a patient because he had a sore leg. If the Church is to be abolished for *expediency sake*, nothing should be said about its internal discrep-

ancies, since these could easily be remedied, and no one desires to uphold them. I attach far more weight to the adverse tone of the press ('Times' and 'P. Mall') than to all that has been said in Parliament. People in England get their newspapers by heart, and then fancy that they have written the leaders themselves; but they never think this way about the speeches in Parliament. My hand is so shaky with gout that I scarcely believe you will be able to read me: *poco male* if you can't, for my head is little better than my fingers."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *May* 5, 1868.

"Let me assure you that, however glad I was to write in the Magazine—that had been an old boyish love of mine (I bought 'Maga' when half crowns were gold guineas to me),—what I prized even higher was the immense advantage I derived from your frank and cordial and clever comments, which, whether you praise or blame, always served me.

"This intercourse to a man like myself was of great value, removed as I was from the opinions of the moving world of clubs and society: it was of immense advantage to have the concentrated budget of the world in the words of a friend who feels interested also in the success I could obtain. For years and years Mortimer O'Sullivan continued to criticise me month by month, and when he died the blank so discouraged and depressed me that I

felt like one writing without a public — till you replaced him; and that same renewal of energy which some critics ascribed to me in 'Tony' and 'Sir B.' was in reality the result of that renewed vigour imparted by your healthful and able advice.

"Now do not be angry at my selfishness if I try to exalt my wares. I tell you candidly I do it in the way of trade: it is a mere expedient to keep my duns off, for—an honest truth—I think hardly enough of what I have done and of myself for doing it.

"I shall not be able to open till the latter end of the year, as I want a mass of material I must get by correspondence. I can't leave my wife: she grew so anxious after the assassination of M'Gee, that she owned she thought I'd never return to England alive. For this she has, of course, no reason beyond mere terror, aided by the fact that some Fenian friend always sends us the worst specimens of Fenian denunciation in the press, with all the minatory passages underlined.

"I have a month's leave at my disposal (and suppose I could easily extend it) whenever I like to take it; and if all should go well in autumn, we might do worse than take a flying ramble through the south and west of Ireland.

"I am going now to look at some of the islands in the Adriatic: they are as little known as the Fijis, and about as civilised.

"When you print my story, 'Fred Thornton,' you'll see it will look better than you think it. I hope you'll put it in your next."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *June* 15, 1868.

"One would have thought that you had a vision of the devil dancing in my breeches pocket when you sent me a cheque in advance. Sooth to say, my 'sooty friend' does perform many a *pas seul* there; but as I seldom put my hand in, I don't disturb him.

"I take your hint and send you an O'D. for the House, and I suppose the one on 'Labouchere' will reach me to-morrow or next day.

"I don't know what is the matter with me. Hitherto I have divided my life pretty equally between whist and sleep; now, as I get no whist here, I have fallen back on my other resource, but with such a will that I rarely awake at all. I'll back myself against anything but a white bear, and give odds.

"This infernal place is slowly wearing me out. I have not one man to talk to. I don't care for indigo,—my own prospects are blue enough. As for rags, my small clothes suffice. But why bore you? I'd like to go and see you, but as that is not exactly practicable, I'll pay you a visit in *imagination*, and in *reality* send my warmest regards to Mrs Blackwood."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Monday, June* 15.

"I have deferred these a day, thinking that the 'Labouchere' O'D. might arrive; but I delay no longer now, as the post is in without it.

"I have got a long letter from Grant from Suez, interesting because from him, but in other respects tame, and with no novelty that the papers have not told us.

"I am informed to-day that the Mediterranean Squadron are to be here next week, and I am not overjoyed at the news. My wife is sick; myself, poor, out of spirits, and dissatisfied, and by no means in the vein to distribute outdoor relief in cigars and bitter beer to a set of noisy devils who, for the most part, reckon uproar as the synonym for jollity.

"That little heathen, as you called him, ——, is raising a No Popery cry in a course of lectures through the country, and means to help himself into Parliament. If the Irish Church be doomed, her fate will be owing to her defenders: the rottenness and black dishonesty of the men who rally round her would disgrace any cause."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *June* 25, 1868.

"I was glad to see your autograph again, even though it brings to me shady tidings. I posted the 'Lab.' O'D. on the 4*th of June* myself.

"It was spicy and 'saucy,' and I'm sorry it has miscarried. I never could re-write anything. I was once called on by F. O. to state more fully some points I had written in my 'Despatch No. so-and-so,' and I had no copy, of course, and was obliged to say I'd write another if they liked, but had lost all memory of that referred to.

"I see little chance of getting out of this except to be buried, and if habit will do something, I'll not mind that ceremony after some years at Trieste. I'd say, Why don't you come and see me?—if I was worth seeing. But why don't you come and see Venice, which is only four hours from me, and then come over to me? Men who hunt seldom fish—a rod spoils a nice light hand; so that what could you do better in your long vacation than come out here, fully see Venice, Vienna, the Styrian Alps, and I'll brush myself up and try and be as pleasant as my creditors will permit me?

"I am delighted with Kinglake, but I want the two first volumes. If I had been in town, where I could have seen books and men (men especially), I'd have been delighted to review him."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *July* 6, 1868.

"My 'Lab.' O'D. was, I believe, filched out of the post here: no loss, perhaps, for it was terribly wicked and personal. This is milder, and cuts *two* ways. Let me see a proof, and if I have a third in the meantime, I will send it.

"Do print my story, like a good fellow. You'll see it is a hit.

"I have just received news that the fleet will be here on Friday, and then—the deluge!

"I have ordered such a supply of bitter ale and cigars that the authorities are curious to know if I am about to open a *Biergarten*, which I secretly suspect I am—minus the ready-money profits.

"Tegeloff comes down to meet the admiral, and if anything turns up you shall have it."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 16, 1868.

"Oh, B. B., what a humbug you are! affecting to be hard-worked, and galley-slaved, and the rest of it. Telling this to *me* too. Dives lecturing Lazarus on the score of dyspepsia is a mild case compared to a publisher asking compassion from a poor devil of an author on the score of his fatigue. I picture you to myself as a careless dog, hunting, flirting, cricket-playing, and picnicing, with no severer labour than reading an amusing proof over a mild cheroot and a sherry cobbler. I tell you that on every ground—morally, æsthetically, and geographically—you *ought* to come and see me, and if you won't, I'll be shot but I'll make an O'Dowd on you.

"So now it seems there is not one 'Labouchere' O'D. but two 'Labouchere' O'Ds., and I see nothing better to do than take your choice. I believe the last the best.

"As the Government are good Christians, and chasten those they love, they have made Hannay a consul! Less vindictive countries give four or five years' hard labour and have an end of it; but there is a rare malice in sending some poor devil of a literary man who loves the Garrick, and lobster salad, and small whist, and small flattery, to eke out existence in a dreary Con-

tinental town, without society or sympathy, playing patron all the while and saying, 'We are not neglecting our men of letters.' I'd rather be a dog and bark at the door of the Wyndham or the Alfred than spend this weariful life of exile I am sentenced to.

"I hope you'll like Bob Considine's story, and let it be a warning and a lesson to you how you worry your wife when you have one, and how unsuspectingly a husband should walk all the days of his life. I don't think the world sees it yet, but I am a great moralist, terribly undervalued and much misunderstood.

"Kinglake is admirable; he has but one fault, —and perhaps it would be none to less impatient men than myself,—he does not *get on* fast enough. It is splendidly written, and with a rare courage too.

"What a fuss you are all making over Abyssinia! Hech, sirs, but ye are gratefu' for sma' mercies! I wish to Heaven the press would moderate its raptures, or we'll get a rare set down from the foreign journals.

"Did I tell you that there is a great rifle-match, open to all nations (even Scotch and Irish), at Vienna this month? There's another reason for coming out. You could make your bull's-eye on your way to me. You had better accede, or you may read of yourself as 'The man who wouldn't come when he was axed.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *August* 16, 1868.

"I am worn out with fatigue and anxiety: for five nights I have not been to bed. My poor wife is again dangerously ill, and as yet no sign of any favourable kind has appeared. God help me in this great trouble!

"I wanted to see those things in print, but it is late now to correct them. I believe I wrote 'Mincio' in the 'La Marmora' paper when it should be 'Oglio.' Look to this for me."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*Aug.* 18, 1868.

"You will, I know, be glad to hear my wife has had a favourable change. One of the doctors of the fleet has been fortunate enough to hit on a lucky treatment, and the admiral most kindly allows him to remain behind and continue the treatment. The fleet sails to-day.

"I send you a few lines which, I believe, would be well liked and opportune: they are true, at all events."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Sept.* 3, 1868.

"I thank you heartily for your kind words about my wife. Thank God, she is now improving daily, and my anxiety has at last got some peace.

"I was greatly pressed to join Lord Clarence Paget down amongst the islands of Dalmatia, and nothing but my anxiety for my wife prevented me.

It would have been a rare opportunity to pick up much odd material, and a pleasant ramble besides. Sir H. Holland has spent a few days with me, and wished me much to join his tour,—and *his* companionship would have been delightful,—but I was obliged to refuse. It is weeks since I wrote anything but a few passing lines, and I have not yet come round to the pleasant feeling that in settling down to my work I have got back to a little world where no cares can come in save those necessary to my hero and heroine. But I hope this will come yet.

"I'd have waited to send you another O'D. or two, but I wanted to thank you for your hearty note, and acknowledge its enclosure. Just as a little money goes far with a poor man, a few words of sympathy are marvellous sweetness in the cup of a lonely hermit like myself, for you have no idea of the dreary desolation of this place as regards one who does not sweat guineas nor has any to sweat. The Party, I fear, will go out before *I* can, and for all I see I shall die here; and certainly if they're not pleasanter company after death than before it, the cemetery will be poor fun with Triestono.

"I don't think Trollope *pleasant*, though he has a certain hard common-sense about him and coarse shrewdness that prevents him being dull or tiresome. His books are not of a high order, but still I am always surprised that he could write them. He is a good fellow, I believe, *au fond*, and has few jealousies and no rancours; and for a writer, is not that saying much?

"What I feel about Kinglake's book is this. The great problem to be solved is, first, Was Sebastopol assailable by the north side? Second, Were the French really desirous of a short war? I suspect K. knows far more than, with all his courage, he could say on the score of our Allies' loyalty; and any one who has not access to particular sources of knowledge would be totally unable to be his reviewer, for in reality the critic ought, though not able to write the book he reviews, to be in possession of such acquaintance with the subject as to be in a position to say what other versions the facts recorded would bear, and to weigh the evidence for and against the author's. Another difficulty remains: what a bathos would it be—the original matter of almost any writer—among or after the extracted bits of the book itself. Kinglake's style is, with all its glitter, so intensely powerful, and his descriptive parts so perfectly picture-like, that the reviewer must needs take the humble part of the guide and limit himself to directing attention to the beauties in view, and make himself as little seen or felt as need be. Not that this would deter me, for I like the man much, and think great things of his book; but I feel I am not in a position to do him the justice his grand book deserves. If I were a week with you in Scotland, and sufficiently able to withdraw from the pleasures of your house, I believe I could do the review; but you see my bonds, and know how I am tied.

"You will see by the divided sheet of this note that I started with the good intention of brevity; but this habit of writing by the sheet, I suppose, has corrupted me, and perhaps I'll not be able now to make my will without 'padding.'

"I have the Bishop of Gibraltar on a visit with me: about the most brilliant talker I ever met."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Sept.* 14, 1868.

"I send you a very spicy bit of wickedness on the Whig-Radicals—but, for the love of the Virgin, let the proof be carefully looked to! I am as uncertain about the errors of the press as I am about my personal shortcomings; but I rely on your reader with the faith of a drowning man on a lifebuoy.

"My wife is a shade better, but my anxiety is great, and I (who habitually sleep eighteen hours out of twenty-four) have not had a night's rest for ten days.

"We are suffering greatly here from drought. No rain has fallen for three months, and my well is as completely drained as my account at my bankers, or anything else you can fancy of utter exhaustion.

"Who writes 'M. Aurelia'? He or she certainly knows nothing of Italian nature or temperament. Not but that the story opens well and is cleverly written, but I demur to the Italian. *I* know the

rascals well; but, like short whist, it cost me twenty years and some tin to do it. Keep my opinion, however, to yourself, for I hate to disparage a contemporary, and indeed this slipped out of me because my daughter has been talking to me of the story while I write."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Sept.* 16, 1868.

"I have just had a round of clerical visitors, beginning with the Bishop of Gibraltar and ending with the Dean of Exeter. Very pleasant talking and humorous men, and only agreeably dashed with the priest element, which is sufficiently feminine to temper down the rougher natures of lay humanities.

"I'd like much to be with you and Story. There is a mine of the pleasantest sort of stuff in him. Pray commend me to him heartily.

"I am sentenced, however, to pass my life with Greeks, Jews, and Ethiopians and people below Jordan,—and I don't take to it, that's a fact! I hear that Gladstone will give up Disendowment and be satisfied with Disestablishment,—not because he wants to let the Church down easier, but that he neither knows how to rob nor what to do with the booty.

"If they only come to a *long* fight over the question, it will end by Dizzy dealing with the parsons as he did with the franchise. He'd bowl over Gladstone first and then carry the whole

question, and not leave a curate nor even a grave-digger of the Establishment.

"I must positively manage a run over to town in spring—and Ireland too. This is essential."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Oct.* 5, 1868.

"I thank you heartily for the note and the enclosure: both were very welcome to me. Old as I am, I still need tin and tenderness.

"I have done a few lines, as you suggested, on Walewsky, whom I knew well. He was a good fellow, but with immense vanity and overruling self-conceit.

"I have determined to go to Ireland in the beginning of the year, and seek out in a part of Donegal not known to me nor, I believe, many others, the *locale* of a new story. I want to do something with a strong local colour, and feel that I must freshen myself up for the effort. My poor wife gains very slowly, but I hope and trust she may be well enough to let me leave her by February.

"If you saw my surroundings here—my Jews and Greeks and Armenians, and, worse than these, my Christian friends!—you would really credit me with resources that I honestly own I never believed in. How I do anything amongst them puzzles me.

"It is a good thought about the Election addresses. I'll think over it.

"Who wrote 'Aurelia,' and how long will it run?"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 17, 1868.

"Of course I only spoke of O'Dowding Trollope in jest. I never had the slightest idea of attacking a friend, and a good fellow to boot. I thought, and shall think it great presumption for him to stand in any rivalry with Lord Stanley, who, though immensely over-rated, is still far and away above we poor devils in action, though we can caper and kick like the devil.

"I have just this moment arrived at home from a short tour in Dalmatia, where I amused myself much, and would have liked to have stayed longer and seen more. I send you the proofs at once, but, as usual, begging you will have them closely looked to by an 'older and a better soldier.'

"I suppose I must set to work now at my yearly consular return, for up to this the Government have never seen my handwriting save in an appeal for my pay!

"I hope I may live to shake hands with you all in spring."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 19, 1868.

"I am so glad to get your long and pleasant letter that I return your fire at once. First of all for explanations. I never seriously thought of O'Dowding Trollope—he is far too good a fellow; and, besides, he is one of us—I mean scripturally, for in politics he is a vile unbeliever.

"You will be glad to hear that our notice of the sailors in the last O'D. was received with '*Cheers for Blackwood*' in the wardroom of the fleet—and by Jack himself, who read it. Lord Clarence wrote to me from Naples saying he was never more gratified in his life, and that the great effect of it on his men is beyond belief.

"I have just come back from a short ramble in Dalmatia with my youngest daughter. It was very pleasant, and we enjoyed ourselves much and saw a good deal. She desires me to send you her best regards for your kind message. I have my doubts if she will not one day figure in 'Maga.' She has just played me a clever trick. She reviewed 'The Bramleighs,' sent it to an Irish paper, the 'D. E. Mail,' without my knowledge, and cut me up for her own amusement. I never guessed the authorship when I read it.

"I assure you that I live in the mere hope of a visit to you. I want to see Scotland, and with you.

"Things are going precious badly here. Beust has gone too fast, and the privileges accorded to the Hungarians here stimulated the other nationalities to a like importunity.

"I think Austria will fall to pieces. It is like the Chinese plum-pudding where they forgot to tie the bag. Spain has deferred the war. No one can venture to fight till he sees how the 'Reds' mean to behave.

"We had Farragut here, and I dined him and *fêted* his officers to the best of my wits. I am

convinced it is our best and honestest policy to treat Yankees with [? cordiality]. Their soreness towards us was not causeless, and we had really not been as generous towards them as we were towards other foreigners. I have openly recanted my opinion of them, and I am proud to say that the first suggestion of paying off the Alabama claim was an O'Dowd. I wish these d—d Tories, before they go out for ever (as it will be), would give me something near or in England. This banishment is scarcely fair.

"I got such a nice note from Kinglake in return for a dedication of the book to him. I only wish I could acknowledge it by the way that would please me best, by telling the world what I think her great book is."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 30, 1868.

"Lord Sheffield was here and spent a day with me, and, strange to say, he does not take a glowing view of the Party. He distrusts Dizzy, as all old Tories do; but, in the name of Heaven, what else have we?

"When Mdlle. Laffarges' sentence was pronounced *avec ses circonstances atténuantes*, Alphonse Karr said it was because she mixed gum always with the arsenic; and may not this be the Disraeli secret? At least, he'd give us gum if he could, and when he can't, he saves torture by administering his poison in strong doses. When the Russian traveller cut up his child and flung him piecemeal

to the wolves, he forgot what a zest he imparted to pursuit by the mere thought that there was always something coming. Don't you think Pat and the wolf have some resemblance? At least, it will be as hard to persuade that there is no more 'baby' to be eaten."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Nov.* 17, 1868.

"Have you seen Labouchere's row with his colleague? What a talent he has for shindies! I got a letter from him a few days ago, and he is quite pleased with the O'D. upon him. There is no accounting for tastes, but most men would have thought it the reverse of complimentary.

"We are threatened with the passage of the Prince of Wales through the place. God grant it be only a threat! If there's anything I abhor, it's playing flunkey in a cocked hat and a policeman's uniform.

"I think our O'Ds. this month will make a noise,—some of them, at least.

"Strange climate this: the roses are coming out first and the oleanders are again blossoming, and all the mountains of Styria around us are covered with snow."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*Wednesday, Dec.* 1868.

"I have been very ill—so ill that I thought these few lines of notice of my old schoolfellow should have been my last. I hope you will think I have

done him well. I am getting round again—that is, if this 'runaway knock' should not be repeated; but Death has occasionally the postman's trick of knocking at several doors together when he is pressed for time, and I believe he is busy with a neighbour of mine this moment. But this is a grim theme, and let us quit it."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Dec.* 17, 1868.

"I get up out of my bed to write to you. I have been—still am—very ill, and not well sure if I am to rub through. My sufferings have been great, and I have had nights of torture I cannot bear to think of.

"I hope Bradlaugh will not give you any trouble, but I feel sure I said nothing that could be called libellous. Would it be reparation to say that, after seeing the published list of the new Government, I beg to assure Mr B. that there is no reason whatever he might not figure amongst them?

"It is great aggravation to dying to feel that I must be buried here. I never hated a place or people so much, and it is a hard measure to lay me down amongst them where I have no chance of getting away till that grand new deal of the pack before distributing the stakes.

"I wish I could write one more O'D.—'the last O'Dowd.' I have a number of little valueless legacies to leave the world, and could put them into codicil form and direct their destination.

My ink is as sluggish as my blood, indeed it has been my blood for many a day, and I must wind up. I don't think I have strength to go over the longer proof: perhaps you would kindly do it for me.

"The cheque came all right, but I was not able to thank you at the time. Give my love to Mrs Blackwood, and say that it was always fleeting across me, in moments of relief, I was to meet you both again and be very jolly and light-hearted. Who knows! I have moments still that seem to promise a rally; but there must be a long spell of absence from pain and anxiety—not so easy things to accomplish.

"I'll write to you very soon again if strong enough."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *the day before Xmas* 1868.

"I promised to report if I was alive, and I do so, though, without any captiousness or Gladstonianism, the matter of my vitality might be well open to contention.

"I am barely able to move from a sofa to a chair, very weak, intensely nervous, and not at all reconciled to the fast-and-loose way death is treating me. Though there is every reason why I ought not to wish to go just now, I will put a bold face on it and say *Ecco mi pronto!* But the grinning humbug sends away the coach with orders to come back to-morrow at the same hour.

"I hope you have heard no more of Bradlaugh.

I'd not like to carry any memory of him with me, which I might if he were annoying you. What a beast I am to obtrude my sadness against the blaze of your Xmas fire! I thought, however, you would like to hear I was yet here,—though to what end or for what use, if I continue as I now am, is not easy to see. I feel, however, that if I was freely bled and a little longer starved, I'd soon be in the frame of mind I detect in my colleagues of the Consular service here, and that, with a slight dash of paralysis, I should soon be *à l'hauteur* of my employment in the public service.

"I have resolved to devote my first moment of strength to a despatch to F. O., and if I be only half an imbecile as I believe, I shall crown myself with imperishable laurel.

"It's a bore for a man—especially an Irishman—to be called away when the rows are beginning! Now next year there will be wigs on the green and no mistake. Besides, I'd like to see Gladstone well away in the deep slough of Disendowment, which I know he'll fall into. Disestablish he may, but the other will be a complication that nothing but open robbery could deal with.

"Then I'd like to see him lose his temper, and perhaps lose his place."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Dec.* 29, 1868.

"Weak as I am, I must thank you for your kind note, which has done me a deal of good. I assure you I never valued kindness more, and I will ask

you to say as much for me to your wife, and to thank her sincerely for all her sympathy and good feeling for me.

"I am, I take it, about as well as I shall ever be again, which is not much to boast of,—but I really am past boasting in any sense; and provided I do not die at the top first, like the cabbage palms, I ought to be thankful.

"I wish with all my heart I could be your guest, in such guise as I might hope to be; now I am not worth my salt. I was dreaming away to-day of making an O'Dowd will, and leaving to the public my speculations on many things ere I go.

"We are living amidst wars and alarms here. Greeks and Turks seem eager to be at each other; and if talking and bumptiousness should carry the day, Heaven help the poor Turk!

"I know Hobart well; and why he didn't sink the *Enosis* when she fired on him I can't conceive, all the more as he is always at least half screwed (they must have watered his grog that morning). The Greeks here have subscribed a million of florins (£100,000), and have ordered an armour-plated frigate to be built and launched by the 20th Feb. I don't know whether all the row will induce the Turks to cede territory, but I'm perfectly certain that it will end by our giving up Gibraltar, though the logic of the proceeding may be a little puzzling at first blush.

"The foreign press is always preaching up neutrality to us in the affairs of Turkey. Good God! can't they see the man who represents us in Con-

stantinople? Can they wish more from us than the most incapable cretin in the public service?

"Thank your nephew cordially for me for his good wishes for me. Who knows if I may not live to say as much to him one day. I get plucky when I am half an hour out of pain.

"I am in great hopes that my wife's malady has taken a favourable turn; one gleam of such sunshine would do me more good than all this dosing.

"Forgive my long rambling note; but it was so pleasant to talk to you, I could not give in."

XIX.

TRIESTE.

1869.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Jan.* 4, 1869.

"THANKS twice over for your note and enclosure. Your hearty sympathy is a very great comfort to me. I suppose I am getting better, but I suffer a good deal, and find it hard to struggle against depression. I am an ungrateful dog after all, for my poor wife is decidedly better, and I ought to be satisfied and thankful for a mercy that any suffering of my own is a cheap price.

"Imagine Charles Mathews asked to pay at the door of the Adelphi, and you can fancy my horror at feeing doctors! But it has come to this with me, and you may suppose how the fact adds bitterness to illness.

"I hope you will like the O'Ds. I sent you, and that they may not savour of that break-up which is threatening me.

"They say that I must give up work for some considerable time; but till they can show me how

I am to live in the interval (even with a diminished appetite), I demur."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Jan.* 19, 1869.

"I have no doubt you will be astonished at this reaction of mine to unwonted industry, but so it has been ever with me. When the lamp has been nearly out a very little trimming has set it to flare out again, even though the illumination last but a short time.

"I send you a bit of light matter, which I hope you will like. The Home Office has pronounced in its favour. I must work, and devilish hard too; for, cruel as it may sound, I have been feeing doctors! So you see that the adage about dogs not eating dogs does not apply to German hounds.

"I have been also driven to get my steam up by being notified officially that the Prince and Princess of Wales are coming down here to embark for Egypt; and as the exact date of their arrival is not known to us, and we only are told to be in readiness to receive them, I have slept in my cocked hat for the last week, and shave myself with my sword on.

"I have no taste for royalties, at least seen near, and would give a trifle that H.R.H. had preferred any other port of departure.

"The *Psyche* arrived here yesterday, but the gale was so severe that the officers who were engaged to dine with me could not come on

shore. The *Ariadne* is hourly expected, but with the wind as it is now, I can't believe she will leave Corfu.

"The Greeks are about to launch another iron-clad, for which the Greek merchants here have paid the cost. She is a large corvette, carrying ten heavy guns and plated with six-inch iron. They are savagely warlike, and say that America is all ready and willing to aid them; and there is more truth in this report than one would imagine from the source it comes from.

"I have got a letter from New York that says the Yankees are wonderfully 'tickled' by the O'D. on the 'Diplomacy.' It has been printed separately as what they call 'a piece,' and circulated largely.

"Tell me, if you can, that you like my 'Whist' sketch."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Feb.* 13, 1869.

"I was very impatient to hear from you. What you say of the whist story is all true, though I didn't make my man a fellow of All Souls' but only a master of that college. Some of the fellows are, however, notoriously the worst whisters going. They are selected for convivial qualities, not the gentlemanlike ones. Unhappily there is a distinction.

"Of course it wants point, just as one-franc Bordeaux wants 'body.' It is merely meant to be light tipple, and if it does not give heartburn there is nothing to grumble at over it.

"Still I'd have made it better if I knew how, but I couldn't hit on anything I thought improvement.

"My wife has got a serious relapse, and I have not written a line since I wrote to you. It will suit my book—that is, my story (not my banker's book)—if you could begin with me by your new volume in July; but of course I am at the mercy of your other engagements."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *March* 2, 1869.

"I send you two short, but I think spicy, O'Ds., and will try to add another. My girls say that if F. O. does not 'inform me' something about the 'new series,' it will be strange and singular, for it is certainly impertinent.

"The war is evidently drawing near, but the terror of each to begin grows greater every day. It is firmly believed here that a secret understanding binds Russia and America, and that if England moves out of strict neutrality the States mean to be troublesome. Farragut told me he saw no navy to compare with the Russian, but I know enough of Yankees to accept his talk with more than one grain of salt.

"The efforts of France and Prussia to secure the alliance of Italy are most amusing, as if the events of late had not shown how totally inoperative Italy was, and that nothing could be worse than her army except her fleet.

"My poor wife makes no progress towards recovery, and all we can do, by incessant care, is to

support her strength. I never leave the house now, and am broken in spirits and nearly 'off the hooks.'

"Do write me a line when you have time. It is always pleasant to hear from you."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *March* 14, 1869.

"You are quite right, there was a clear *non sequitur* in the new series O'D., and I have corrected it, I hope, satisfactorily.

"You are not, I think, so right about 'Norcott,'[1] at least I hope not, for I cannot see the improbability or impossibility you speak of in the latter part. The sketch of Hungarian life was, I believe, perfectly correct, and there was no more improbability in the story than that of heaping many incidents in the career of a single individual, which, after all, is a necessity of a certain sort of fiction, and pardonable so long as they are not incongruous. It is not worth discussing, besides; indeed, I never do uphold or even defend what I have done except the critic be, as you are, a friend whose objections are meant as warnings and guidings.

"My chances of seeing London this year decrease almost daily. My poor wife's symptoms are very threatening, and I cannot leave home now, though much pressed to pay a long-promised visit to Croatia, even for a day.

"Robert Lytton is now Secretary at Vienna,

[1] "That Boy of Norcott's," which was just finishing its serial course in 'The Cornhill Magazine.'

and is coming to see me. He and 'his'n' are living with the Bloomfields, who have most hospitably taken them in till they can house themselves, which (you know) can only be done in Austria on the 24th August.

"You don't agree with me about the proximity of war, but I know it has been twice, within the last three weeks, on the very brink of beginning. Louis Napoleon has fallen into a state of silent despondency, in which he will give no orders, offer nothing, nor agree to anything, and R[ouher] is often left days without any instructions to guide him.

"As for Austria, she is in a terrible funk, *et du raison.* Her army is but half drilled, and the new weapon is a puzzle to the raw recruits; besides this, she has nothing that could be called a general, —nothing above the Codrington class, which, after all, can only pull through by the pluck and bravery of British troops.

"The hatred of Prussia is so inveterate here that anything like a candid opinion as to the chances of the campaign against France is not to be looked for, but so far as I can see men would generally back the French. How would the Whigs conduct a great war, I wonder? Certainly Cardwell and his economics would cut a sorry figure if he were called on for a big effort.

"I hope the mode in which Gladstone proposes to *endow* Maynooth (while affecting mere compensation) will give the Tories a strong ground of attack. The Bill is a palpable project to buy every

one at the expense of the Irish Church. The landlord, the tenant, the priest, the Presbyterian, even the Consolidated Fund, are to be relieved of part of their charge for Irish charities; and yet it will pass, if for no other reason than that the nation sees one party to be as dishonest as the other, and that if Gladstone were beaten by Dizzy, Dizzy would carry the measure afterwards.

"If the 'Ballot' O'D. be late to send back in proof, you will deal with it yourself. It is well to take the themes that are before men's eyes, and say our say while there are ears to hear us.

"The Emperor of Austria arrives here on Friday, and I am bidden to a great banquet, to be eaten in a tight uniform and epaulettes 'with what appetite I may.' I wish I could O'Dowd them all, and take my vengeance 'in kind.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *April* 13, 1869.

"The piece of autobiography is fact. I was a young college man when I did the trick, and can to this day remember one sentence of Boyton's own words, which I gave in the report verbatim. The peer was the late Marquis of Downshire, the greatest ass of the Conservative party, *et c'est beaucoup dire.* Boyton's death was commemorated by a beautiful article in 'Blackwood,' — I believe written by O'Sullivan, but I'm not sure. As for the '*Speech*-Makers' Manual,' it was published by Routledge & Co. I got it out before I wrote my papers. It is incredibly absurd. The

inscrutable man I refer to was Villiers — Fred Villiers, — a great friend of all the Bulwers, and formerly M.P. for Canterbury. He was no Villiers, had nothing, nor belonged to any one; but he was at the top of London society and knew every duke in England, and made a brilliant career of it for at least ten years or more.

"I am very full of my trip to London, and mean to take my youngest daughter over—she has never been in England—to visit some friends and pass the summer in Devonshire. My leave is a very short one; and as they stop my pay, I can't afford to prolong it. It will be a great delight to me to see you and Mrs Blackwood again, and I feel this is to be my farewell visit to England, my possibly last appearance before retiring from the boards for ever.

"I have just found the reference to Boyton. It is taken from 'The Dublin Evening Mail' (the paper in which I gave Downshire his speech) for August 1833, but my impression is that there is another and longer notice of him in some other magazine later on.

"It is very rarely that I wish for my youth back again; but now that I have begun to think of those days, and all the fine-hearted fellows I knew in them, I cannot repress the wish that I was once more what I was thirty-five years ago, and take my chance for doing something other and better than I have done.

"The Austrians and Italians are doing now what they ought to have done fifteen years ago,

making an alliance *against* France—that is, to maintain a united neutrality if pressed by France to join her. How strange it is that nations, no more than individuals, do not see that it is not enough to do the *right thing*, but that it ought to be done at the *right time* also.

"For ever since I have known Italy I have said her natural ally was Austria, her natural enemy France."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Hôtel du Louvre, Paris, *May* 4, 1869.

"'Thus far into the bowels of the land have we marched' without other impediment than the Custom House officers, and mean to be in London by Thursday next. Will you drop me a line to Jr. Carlton to say when we may hope to see you?

"I'd not have delayed in Paris, but Lyons has been exceedingly kind and hospitable, and I am glad to have a long gossip with him over things past and present and to come.

"I have done nothing but *rencontre* with old schoolfellows — white-headed rascals that terrify me with their tiresome stories and half-remembered remembrances. Good God, am I like these Pharisees? is my constant question, and I have never the pluck to answer it.

"We travelled a whole day with Lewes and his wife (Adam Bede), and were delighted with her talk. Her voice alone has an indescribable charm.

"I write in the buzz of a room with 250 travellers and fifty or more particular acquaintances who are

telling me what they fancy are good stories, though if I tried to palm them on you as such, you'd soon let me know your mind.

"*Tanti saluti a la Signora.*"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"33 Brook Street, London, *May* 12, 1869.

"I cannot tell you how I feel the disappointment of not seeing you here, and my regret is all the deeper for the cause of your absence. I thoroughly know besides how you yourself regard a position which, while you are powerless for all good, leaves you still unable to quit it. I fervently hope that your poor brother may rally, and that I may soon hear better tidings of him. In the turmoil and movement around me I always feel like a man the day after a hard drinking-bout, my head aching, my senses confused, my memory shaken, and through all a sort of shame that this is not my place at all, and that I am wastefully squandering my hard-got half-crowns to the detriment of my family. On the other side of the picture I find great kindness and great courtesy, a number of agreeable people to talk to, and the only women I have seen for a long while who, to be pleasant, do not need to be made love to. We have been greatly asked out, and some of my old friends have vied with each other in kindness to my daughters.

"Lord L.[1] proposes our passing next week at

[1] A story is told of this visit. The Consul, on his arrival in England, called upon Lord Lytton. The two novelists chatted for some time, and at length Lytton said, "I'm so glad for many reasons

Knebworth, and the idea has something tempting, but I suspect if you are not likely to come up, I shall scarcely delay here, but make a straight run home, from which my last accounts are far from reassuring.

"My old friend Seymour is with us every day with plans for amusement.

"To turn to other matters, I have a couple of half finished O'Ds. which, if you like to print, I shall have time to lick into shape. I went yesterday to the 'House' to see if my countryman the Mayor of Cork might not furnish matter for an O'Dowd, but the whole was flat and wearisome."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"KNEBWORTH, *May* 18, 1869.

"Half stupid with a cold, and shaken by the worst cough I ever had in my life, I send you an O'D., part of which I read to your uncle, and indeed wrote after a conversation with him. I hope it has more go in it than the man who wrote it.

to see you here. You will have an opportunity presently of meeting your chief, Clarendon. I expect him every moment." Lever was aghast. He recollected that he had left Trieste without obtaining formal "leave." He endeavoured to excuse himself to Lytton (who was now very deaf): he had to be off to meet his daughters. While he was apologising for his hurried decision to say good-bye, the Minister for Foreign Affairs was announced. "Ah, Mr Lever," said Lord Clarendon, "I didn't know that you had left Trieste." "No, my lord," stammered Lever, unable for the moment to see how he was going to get out of the difficulty. "The fact is, I thought it would be more respectful if I came and asked your lordship personally for leave." Possibly this anecdote is of the "ben trovato" order.—E. D.

"I am told you are likely to come up to town, and I cannot tell you how I would like to meet you. It may be, most probably is, my last appearance on these boards, for it is most unlikely I shall ever cross the Alps again, so that I entreat you let us have a shake hands, if only that we may recognise each other when on t'other side of the Styx.

"I shall be back in town to-morrow or the day after, and hope to hear news of you.

"I am afraid to write more, I am so overwhelmed by wheezing and nose-blowing."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *June* 25, 1869.

"I have been coughing unceasingly since I saw you last, and with difficulty secured intervals to write these O'Ds. We made only a day's delay at Paris, and came on here without resting at all.

"Of my wife I can only say she is not worse, but I dare not say she is better. The excessive heat here is very debilitating, especially coming after a somewhat rough spring.

"Sydney is pressing me to join her in a visit to a chateau in Croatia, where she is about to stay for a couple of months, but I can't afford the time, though in one way it might repay me."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 9, 1869.

"I have just got your note and am glad you like the O'Ds., but the best of the batch are

not here, as I am sure you will think,—'Forfeited Pledges' and 'What to do with it' especially. I cannot throw off my cough, and as I don't sleep at night I do nothing but sleep all day, and this disposition of my time is little favourable to habits of industry.

"I suppose you are right. Syd's energy would have carried me off to Croatia if possible. Do you remember the story of the Irish priest telling the peasant that whenever he—the peasant aforesaid—went into a 'shebeen' to drink, his guardian angel stood weeping at the door. 'Begorra,' said Pat, 'I don't wonder but if he had sixpence he'd be in too.' It is really the want of the sixpence makes me a guardian angel.

"The weather is intensely hot here just now, and all out-of-door life impossible till evening, and for my own part I never wander beyond the walls of my own garden, which, fortunately for me, is very pretty and shady too. Very little companionship would reconcile me to the place, but there's positively none. It was this sort of solitude, begetting a species of brooding, that broke down my poor brother in an Irish parish; and sometimes I dread the depression for myself. It costs me such an effort to do anything."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 10, 1869.

"You have read of some ships having crossed the Atlantic with eight feet of water in the hold, bulwarks staved in, sails in tatters, the whole only

kept afloat by the incessant labour of crew and passengers at the pumps; and such is pretty much my condition, and must, I believe, continue to be for the rest of my voyage here, and what is perhaps worst of all is, in this same lamentable state I must still solicit freight and cargo, ask to be 'chartered,' and pledge myself to be seaworthy and insurable.

"Well, I can only say, 'I'll not humbug you.' You shall see the craft in all its rottenness, and not embark a bale on board of me without knowing how frail is the hope you trust to. Having said this much of warning (not that you need warning, for no man better knows the value of what he takes or rejects), I have now another confession to make. I have begun my new story, which I call 'Lord Kilgobbin,' which will be essentially Irish, and for which, if I live and thrive, I mean to take a look at Ireland about May next.

"I have made such an opening—such as all here are delighted with, and I myself think not so bad. I shall be ready if you like to begin in April, and shall be able to send you No. 1 before the present month is out.

"I had gout on me all the time I was writing the 'Dodds,' and I have a theory that if it does not utterly floor me it sharpens me. What debilitates occasionally stimulates, just as cutting a ship's timbers will give a knot to her speed."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 12, 1869.

"I am going on fairly: my malady is there, and must stay there; but I am going to tide over this time, and will not fret myself for the future.

"I'm glad you like my talk. How I'd like to read you my opening of 'Kilgobbin.' They like it much here, but I don't know how much may have been said to cheer me. I'm not able to write beyond a very short time, but I must do something or my head will run clean away with me.

"My wife's state keeps me in intense anxiety, but on the whole she is better than heretofore.

"Is there anything out worth reviewing? I'd like to have something would take me off myself for a while.

"That poor fellow Baker, who was shot, was a cousin of my wife,—a good, amiable, soft-hearted fellow, I hear, and incapable of a severe thing."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 16, 1869.

"I kept over the O'Ds., at your nephew's suggestion, till I heard from you, but am glad now to see that you have no change to advise, for I don't think I could make them better, especially by dictation. Any value these things have is as a sort of 'schnaps,' and nobody likes water with his glass of curaçoa.

"The heat is so overpowering here that I can do nothing, and I am afraid, in my wife's critical

state, to leave home for the Styrian mountains, where some hospitable invitations are tempting me. From all I can learn, there is a fine field for story-writing in those unvisited lands on the Hungarian frontier, and I may one of these days perhaps be able to profit by it.

"I am glad the chestnut turns out so well, but I was sure she would improve every day she was ridden. If I were Mrs B. I'd strongly demur to putting a collar on her, at least till she was thoroughly made for the saddle; for it is a curious fact that you may harness your saddle-horse but you can't ride your harness-horse. Mrs B. will understand me, and I am sure agree with me. Whether she does or not, give her my kindest regards."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"*July* 16, 1869.

"You are a bad boy not to have come up to town and let us have a shake hands together. I'll forgive you, however, if you make some pretext for seeing Venice, and come over here for a few days to me. There must surely be some dead time of the year, when magazines, like their writers, grow drowsy and dozy; at all events make time and take a short run abroad, and it will do you a world of good."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Aug.* 4, 1869.

"I send you two O'Ds. which I have just done, and hope you will think them good. I imagine

you will insert the small benefaction—which I think well enough—in next batch.

"The heat has been nigh killing us all here. Sydney was thrown down by sunstroke on Sunday coming from church, and is still in bed, but now better. The heat was 94° in the shade, and people who had come from Egypt say they had never suffered anything like it there. My poor wife has felt it severely, and the strongest of us have had to give up food and exercise, and merely wait for evening to breathe freely.

"Pray make them send me June No., for I can't follow the story till I get it.

"Don't you think that they have hunted down that blackguard, Grenville Murray, too inhumanly even for a blackguard!—I do. (I mean Knox's decision.)"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Sept.* 6.

"I thank you much for your generous remittance. I have not been doing anything lately for a heavy feverish cold, which has kept me in a dark room and a low diet.

"I want to write to you about Byron, but I will wait till I see if General Mengaldo (Byron's old Venetian friend) will give me leave to tell *his* story of Byron's separation, and confute the Yankee woman whose name I have not temper to write.

"Mengaldo lived more in Byron's intimacy as an equal (not a dependant) than any one during Byron's life at Venice, and would be a mine of

curious information if he could be led to open it. Hudson alone has influence with him, and since I saw that woman's book I wrote to H. about it.

"There is a most curious little volume just out by Persano, 'The Hero of Lessa,' all about Cavour and Garibaldi, confirming everything I once wrote you about Cavour's complicity and duplicity. Would you like a short notice or review of it?

"My wife is most seriously ill, the rest all well."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*Sept.* 26, 1869.

"I have just read the O'D. about Canning to the Chief Baron, who has been dining here with me, and I send it hoping you will laugh at it as much as he did: he also liked the Fenian paper much, and I send them both at once, as if you have anything to add, &c., there will be ample time.

"I never write a line now but O'D., and I only send you about one in every five I invent, for the time is not propitious in new subjects.

"My poor wife continues seriously ill, and I am myself so worn by watching and anxiety that I am scarcely alive."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 8, 1869.

"I don't like delaying this O'D., though I thought at one time to keep it till I had heard

from you. The 'Austrian Free Press' has translated the Austrian O'D. and the Persano one, and the German party seems greatly pleased with the tone of the first, though of course the Italians are indignant.

"I think you will like the bit about Baron Warde in this O'D. It was to Lord Normanby I presented him, at a party at Scarlett's, who was then British Chargé d'Affaires.

"I have little heart to do anything. My wife has had to submit to a third operation, and cannot rally from the great nervous depression, and has now ceased her only nourishment, wine.

"Loss of rest at night and want of fresh air by day have worn me so much that I have no more energy left in me. Of course years have their share in this, and I don't try to blink that.

"Chas. Reade has found a sympathetic critic who has forgotten none of his merits; not but that on the whole I agree with him, and certainly concur in the belief that Reade has got nothing like his deserts in popular favour. The coarsenesses that disfigure him (and they do) are, after all, not worse than many in Balzac, and no one disputes *his* supremacy.

"They tell me that the Cabinet can't agree about the Irish robbery bill; but I don't think the thieves will fall out, seeing how much booty they have to divide elsewhere. It's rather a good joke to see a Whig Radical Government trying to revive the Holy Alliance, and sending Lord Clarendon over Europe to concoct alliances against

France. The fear of what will happen when L. N. dies is a strong bond of interest, and in the common fear of a great Democratic revolution even Austria and Prussia are willing to shake hands. Would it be well to O'Dowd them?

"I wish I had three days with you in your breezy atmosphere to shake off my dumps and my dreariness."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Sunday, Oct.* 10.

"As I have made a slight addition to the 'Canning' O'D., I do not like to delay the proof beyond to-day, to which I waited in hope of a letter from your uncle.

"I have no good news to send of my poor wife, and I am very low and dispirited in consequence.

"I had a capital O'D. in my head this morning, but a bad sermon I have just heard has driven it clean out of my mind. I am quite ready to disendow my consular chaplain, and won't give him his Sunday dinner in consequence."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Oct.* 14, 1869.

"Many thanks for your cheque, which I have this moment received.

"You are not, I think, quite just about the last two O'Ds. First of all, an O'D. need not, nor can it, be always an epigram; it must occasionally be an argument epigrammatically treated, and 'Close and the Carmelite' is, I believe, such. The

changed position of two Churchmen (representatives as they are of schools of thought) is well worth notice, and it would be well to show that the Dean's Protestantism is not the national religion.

"As to the Volunteers, respect for what you think of them (and I do not) always holds my hands when I allude to them. I would not take a foreigner's opinion on an English *institution*, though I would respectfully listen to his judgment on a professional matter,—as, for instance, if N. were to talk of a cancer or an aneurism, I would accept his competence to pronounce in the same way [as] when a French soldier like MacMahon or Pallitan, or an Austrian such as Hess, or a Russian like T., derides the idea of such bodies being called soldiers, and advises England not to trust to such defence if the hour of invasion approach. I really feel that it requires great self-restraint not to speak out on an inefficiency made all the more insufferable by an overweening vanity and bumptiousness of conduct (as witness the walk past t'other day at Brussels) that makes one anything but proud of the common countyship.

"Fortunately for your patience I am writing near the post hour, and I must spare you a long discourse on these two themes that you do not seem to think the world will much care for, but that I believe are both of them the very subjects men will be inclined to talk over.

"I half doubted whether, after your dissatisfac-

tion with what I thought good and well-timed, I should forward this O'D. on 'Irish Queries'; but it is a mere argument, treated Hibernically, and you will do what you like with it.

"My home is a very sad one, and I see little prospect of brighter fortune.

"A serious revolt has just broken out in Dalmatia. The peasants refuse to be enrolled in the Landwehr, and have risen, and, up to this, resisted the troops with success. Of course the thing is deeper than a mere local row, and being on the Montenegrin frontier, has an uncommonly ugly look. Three thousand men have been despatched and two gunboats this morning to Cáttaro, and there will be warm work there before to-morrow evening. Austria is in that state that any one movement of her incongruous nationalities may bring down the whole rotten edifice with a run.

"I think Sydney is 'brewing an MS.,' for I scarcely see her all day, and she has a half conscious air of authorship at dinner."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 27, 1869.

"I send you I think a smart O'Dowd 'On the Misery of Singing without an Accompaniment' (or rather, speaking without a brogue). I'm terribly hipped: I wish to God I could get out of this! If nothing else offers, perhaps I could get Elizabeth Barry to steal me: I'd make no objection to her cutting off my curls, and as to my clothes, I'll be shot if she could change them for worse."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Nov.* 9, 1869.

"I have detained these proofs that I might hear from you; but the snow has begun to make the passes difficult for the post, and I think it better to despatch them. I hope you'll think them good. There was a slaughter of the innocents last month —that is, if they ever reached you.

"If my poor wife had not been so dreadfully ill I believe I'd have managed a trip to Suez. I had a pressing invitation, and it would have been exciting enough for the mere strange gathering it brought about, but my home anxieties are thickening every hour.

"You know we are in trouble here in Dalmatia. So far back as July I warned Lord Bloomfield that there was mischief brewing, and that Montenegro was preparing for an outbreak. Of course I never supposed that a consular report would carry weight, but I wrote in a light jocular strain that I thought might be attended to. The reply was: 'I showed Beust your note, and he thinks you have been humbugged.' Now I have the satisfaction of seeing B. make a very humble *amende*, admitting that I knew more of what was menaced than his agent at Cáttaro.

"Still the Austrians believe, or affect to believe, that Russia is not in it; nor is she more than certain American politicians are in Fenianism—that is, they want to see the chances of success before they go farther. I hear that Gladstone has got a fright about Ireland, and that his Land

Bill will be 'Moderate and even Conservative'—in fact, he begins to feel that dealing with Ireland means 'concession,' and when you have given all you have, you've to make way for somebody else who'll give something more. Bright is very much disgusted at the moderation of the measure intended, and the Cabinet, I hear, not one-minded.

"All these things, however, open no prospect for a Tory Government, and out of pure fear of what Gladstone would do, *if pushed to it*, the squires will vote for him rather than risk—not their seats, but their acres.

"The indifference foreign statesmen feel about England, and what she thinks on anything now, exceeds belief. I declare to you I believe Holland has as much weight in Europe.

"Would you like something about Suez?—I mean, about the trade prospects, &c.,—that is, if anything could be had new or striking. Up to this the only speculation I have seen worth anything is how greatly to our benefit the route would be if we had a war with America, for we could certainly 'make the police' of the Mediterranean and Levant, though not of the Atlantic and Pacific."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Nov.* 29, 1869.

"I am still confined to the house with a feverish cold, and overrun by travellers to and from Suez.

"The Dalmatian revolt is becoming a very serious affair. The peasants are beating the troops,

and now the season must stop all operations till spring. Whether by that time the complication will not take wider limits and embrace Servia and the Balkans, is not easy to see. That blessed ally of ours, Louis Napoleon, is now intriguing to get a Russian alliance and undo all the work of the Crimean campaign, and of course our 'Non-Interference Policy' will leave the coast free to him! Thank God, his home troubles may overtake him before he goes much farther!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Dec.* 11, 1869.

"Thanks for your note and its enclosure, and thanks, too, for telling me that the deferred O'Ds. are not rejected ones, for I was getting low-spirited at the number of recruits sent back as below the standard. When I asked you to send me the unused, it was a painful confession. It was like a manufacturer owning to his being reduced to work up his old material. Perhaps I shall one of these days make an O'Dowd on 'Devil's Dust in Literature.' What do you think of it?

"I hope you will like the 'O'Dowd' I send. It is meant to expose a very common blunder respecting the influences of the better classes abroad. You must ensure the correction yourself, and it will be the last I shall forward this month. For the last week I have been keeping a dark room with a severe ophthalmia. It was a dreary time, and I am glad it is over.

"Gladstone is going to propose a sort of Court

of Arbitration for land purposes—that is, another body of men to be shot at when the peasants find landlords scarce, or what the sportsmen call 'wild.'

"This Dalmatian revolt must sleep during the winter, but it will be a serious mischief yet, especially if this Franco-Russian alliance takes place. Our policy now ought to be to reconcile Austria and Prussia at once, and prepare for the big struggle that is coming to undo the results of the Crimean War. I wish, if it be decided to represent England abroad by old *women*, that at least they would send us old *ladies*."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Dec.* 14, 1869.

"I hope for both our sakes you are not quite just about the 'Pope' O'D. I think it has a smack of Swift—a very faint one it may be, but still enough to recall the flavour. The anecdote of the Yankee was not made for the occasion, only it occurred to Sir J. Hudson, and not to O'Dowd. Take them all in all, I have done better and worse; but I think with those you have already on hand, they will make a fair batch.

"I hope you will like the 'Dr Temple' O'D. It, at least, is worked out.

"I am very poorly, and very low in spirits; my wife grows weaker every day, and our anxieties are great. For the first time in my life I find it a 'grind' to write a few lines. *Le commencement du fin*, maybe—who knows?"

XX.

TRIESTE.

1870.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Jan.* 4, 1870.

"WHEN I saw 'Maga' without me I began to feel as if I had died (hitherto at Trieste I only believed I had been buried), and when your cheque reached me this morning I pictured myself as my own executor! You are most kind to bethink you of the necessities of this pleasant season,—indeed I scarcely know anything of Christmas but its bills! Still, I should be well content to have nothing heavier on my heart than money cares, and I believe that is about as dreary a confession as a man can well make.

"I am sorry to hear you have not been well, but I trust it is a thing of the past already: I don't think either of us would be what is called a good patient. I like the Homer Odyssey (?) greatly. I suspect I guess the writer—that is, from a mere accident. 'Suez' is excellent, and Stanley's opinion is that of the best German engineers also. Aren't

you flattering to my Lord of Knebworth? It was not, however, a 'good fairy' gave him a wife.

"Sydney sends her love. She is going over to England in spring (at least she says so, and I suppose I am bound to believe it) to pay that Devonshire visit I interrupted last year."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Feb.* 3, 1870.

"In Stanley's clever article on 'Suez' for January there is a sketch of an Italian travelling companion so like a portrait that we all here fancy we recognise the man. It is the same who addresses the Empress Eugénie so brusquely. If we be right, he is an old acquaintance of ours called 'Campereo.' Pray, if occasion serve, ask if this be the man. It is wonderfully like him at all events, and I could almost bet on it.

"I have been hoping to hear from you, and delaying to tell you—what for me is a rare event—a piece of pleasant news. Sydney is about to be married. The *sposo*, an Englishman, young, well educated, well-mannered, and well off; he is the great millowner, paper manufacturer, and shipbuilder of Austria, and has about £7000 a-year.

"I need not say it is a great match for a poor 'tocherless lass,' but I can say that the man's character and reputation would make him acceptable if he had only £500 a-year.

"To myself, overborne and distressed by the thought of how little I had done for my children, and how wastefully and foolishly I had lived,—

spending my means pretty much as I did my brains, in bursts of spendthrift extravagance, and leaving myself in both cases with nothing to fall back on,—it is a relief unspeakable that one of my poor girls at least is beyond the straits of penury.

"I know that you and Mrs Blackwood have a warm and kindly feeling towards us, and you will be glad to hear of such good fortune. I do not know that the excitement has been very favourable to my poor wife, who can only look as yet to the one feature—that is, that she loses a child's companionship; but I trust that in time she will see with me that the event is one to be truly thankful for.

"The marriage is to take place on the 21st, and after a trip to Rome, &c., they visit Paris, and on to London some time in April. Sydney ardently hopes that you and Mrs Blackwood may be in town this season: she longs to see you both again.

"I need not say I have done nothing but answer and write notes for the last few weeks, and sit in commission over trousseau details, for which how I am ever to pay I hope somebody knows—but *I* do not. I remember Fergus O'Connor saying that he could 'get in' for Mallow 'if he could stand a dinner to his committee,' and I can fully appreciate that nice situation at present.

"Mr Cook has been at me again in a pamphlet. It was only a few days back he went through here with a gang, and I had determined to dine at *table*

d'hôte with them, but was laid up with a heavy cold and sorely disappointed accordingly.

"I hear from London that Dizzy is hopeful and in good heart, but of what or why I cannot guess. Certainly the country is not Conservatively-minded now, nor could the Tories succeed to power except by repeating the Reform Bill dodge of outbidding the Whigs and then strengthening the Radical party. That Dizzy is ready for this, and that he would push a Land Bill for Ireland to actual commission, I can easily believe; but are we not all sick of being 'shuttlecocked' between two ambitious and jealous rivals? And is there not something else to be thought of than who is to be First Lord of the Treasury?

"I see a book advertised called 'Varieties of Viceregal Life.' If I had it I suspect I could make an amusing paper on it—that is, if the book bore out its title."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Feb.* 9, 1870.

"I have been hoping and hoping to have a line from you, and would still go on waiting for it only that the 'O'Dowd' I now send is too 'apropos' for delay. It is the only one I have written, but think you have still one or two by you—'The Pope,' and 'Landlords and Limits.' I am terribly knocked up,—such an attack on the chest,—and not able to leave my room, and at a time when I am full of care and occupation.

"Lord Clarendon has written me a private and

confidential about 'Cook and the Excursionists,' who have petitioned him against me. Lord Clarendon evidently foresees a 'question' to be asked in the House, and wants an answer. Mine was that Cornelius O'Dowd was not in the Consular service, nor, so far as I was aware, had he any relations with F. O.; that he was a person who amused himself and, when he could, other people, by ridiculing whatever was absurd, or in bad taste or manners, or hypocritical in morals; and that being one who had followed the avocation of a writing man for thirty years, he must be understood to have acquired some notions, not only of the privileges but the responsibilities of the pen; and that, finally, as Consul Lever, I had no explanation to make Mr Cook, who first blackguarded me in print and then appealed to my official superior.

"Sydney's marriage comes off Monday 21st. I am forced to say, like King Frederic of Prussia, 'Another such victory would ruin me.' To be sent to one's grave by milliners does seem a very ignoble destiny!—but a bad bronchitis, aided by Brussels lace, has brought me to a state of feverish irritability that, if it does not terrify *me*, certainly alarms my family, and *con ragione*."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *March* 3, 1870.

"Perhaps you'll say 'dull as ditchwater' was the inspiration as well as the title of this 'O'Dowd,' and mayhap I won't deny it. It is, however, a heartfelt cry over the dreariness of the time the

'whole world over,' and I am sure many will acknowledge the truth of it.

"I know nobody jolly but Sydney. She writes me full accounts of Venetian Carnival doings,—masques and gondoliers, &c., &c., and music on the Grand Canal till daybreak.

"Here I am hipped and out of heart,—waiting, too, but for the undertaker, I believe, for it is the only 'carriage exercise' I should now care for.

"We had two smart shocks of earthquake yesterday. I thought that Cumming was going to be right after all, but it passed off with nothing worse than some tinkling of the teacups and a formidable swinging of the lustre over our heads."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *March* 6, 1870.

"The Whigs would like to blend up Fenianism and agrarian crime. *Now they are not to be so confounded.* The National party is anti-English, rebel, violent, cruel, anything you like, but the men *who shoot the landlords are not the Fenians!* It is a brief I should like well to plead on, and you will see ere long that there will be many to acknowledge its truth.

"Gladstone will carry his Bill, I'm sure, but if the Tories are adroit they will make a complete schism in the Irish party and throw the Catholic set so completely on the side of the Ministry as to disgust the Protestant feeling of England. How I wish I had half an hour with Dizzy, and that he would condescend to listen to me!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*March* 15, 1870.

"I was glad to hear from you, and gladder to hear you liked the O'Ds.

"Sydney is away to Rome honeymooning it very pleasantly, and meeting all manner of attentions, &c. The trousseau has spoilt my trip to town. I have 'taken out' in white lace what I meant for 'whitebait,' and I must try and screw on in life for one year more if I mean to see London again. It was the celebrated Betty O'Dwyer that said to her legs, 'I'll take another season out of you before I'll give you to Tom O'Callaghan.'"

To Mr William Blackwood.

"*March* 16, 1870.

"I have no patience with you for being ill. What! a fellow of something and twenty, with a sound chest, six feet in his stockings, and a hunter in top condition; what an ungrateful dog to Fortune you are! Leave sickness to old cripples like myself,—hipped, dunned, and blue-devilled,—with a bad balance at the bank, and a ruined digestion. *You* have no business with malady! Come over and see me here: the very contrast will make you happy and contented.

"I hope, however, you are all right by this time. I'm sure you stick too close to the desk. Be warned by *me!* It was all over-application and excessive industry ruined *my* constitution; and instead of being threatened to be cut off, as I am

now, in the flower of my youth, I might have lived on to a ripe old age, and all that rottenness that they tell us makes 'medlars' exquisite.

"I send you a tailpiece to the O'D. Heaven grant that the Saxon intelligence, for which I daily feel less veneration, should not suspect me of being a Fenian in disguise, though if it should get me dismissed from my consulate and turned out into the streets, I'd almost cry hurrah! for, after all, picking oakum could scarcely be worse than cudgelling my brains for what, after all the manipulation, can't be got out of them."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *April* 1, 1870.

"I suppose 'Sanding the Sugar' reached you too late, or was it that you don't like it? *I* thought it was good, but needed careful going over again and perhaps enlarging.

"I send you three now, and hope you will like them. I have been days over them, and without getting on, for my poor wife's time of being operated on again draws nigh, and her fear and nervousness have made her seriously ill. For the last three nights I have been sitting up beside her, and as I have been very 'creaky' some time back, this pressure has pushed me very hard indeed.

"Many thanks for 'Piccadilly'; it is beautifully got up, and the style and look of it perfectly faultless. I have re-read it, and like it greatly, —indeed, I think more than the first time. In the

little touches of that brusqueness which the well-bred world affects, Oliphant is admirable, and so removed from that low-world dialogue that vulgar novelists imagine people in Society converse in. I am, however, not surprised at the strange step he has taken in life; such extreme fastidiousness could find no rest anywhere but in savagery, just as we see incredulity take refuge in the Church of Rome: *les extrêmes se touchent* oftener in life than we suspect."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *April* 5, 1870.

"I send you an 'O'Dowd' I hope will please you. I think it has more 'fun' in it than all my late ones,—though, God knows, I never myself felt less disposed to drollery, for I am literally worn out with watching beside my poor sick wife. I cannot bear to read, and it is a blessing to me to run to the pen for distraction.

"The O'D. on Canning has been going the round of the Italian papers, and I see one, the 'Eco de l'Arno,' has given a sort of series of extracts from the O'Ds. called Leverania.

"I see Whiteside is in London. How I wish I could go over! I'd like to have a dinner with you both. You'd be greatly pleased with him.

"I am told that the deadlock about the Education Bill is caused by the opposition of the Irish Catholic bishops, who insist on denominational schools—that is, having the whole grant for themselves. No bad idea after all. I wish

every consul, with a bald back to his head, should have double salary.

"My best regards to Mrs Blackwood. Tell her she'll have her meals in peace this time in London, but it isn't my fault after all."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *April* 12, 1870.

"You gratify me much by what you say of these O'Ds. Failing health, broken spirits, a very sad home, and many uncertainties are hard to bear, but I believe I could face them all better than the thought of 'Brain bankruptcy.' To draw on my intellect and get for answer 'no assets' would, I feel, overwhelm me utterly. Your hearty words have, therefore, done me good service, and in my extra glass of claret—and I will take one to-day—I'll drink your health.

"I am distressed at not getting the *April No. of 'Maga'* yet; by some accident it has been forgotten or miscarried, and it is a great comfort to me to 'cuddle over.'

"My poor wife is still suffering intensely, and too weak to undergo the operation, which is eminently necessary. She has at last, too, lost all courage, and, I might almost say, wish to live. Much of this depression is from actual pain, and all our efforts are now directed to allay that. I never leave the house, or, if I do, go beyond the garden. Of course, I admit no visitors, and scarcely remember the days of the week."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *April* 15, 1870.

"I think the title had better be 'Personal and Peculiar.' I have added and changed the conclusion, whether for the better or not you shall decide. There was some danger in saying more, and I might have found, if I went on, that, as Curran says, I had argued myself *out* of my brief.

"I have a half suspicion the Bill may break down after all,—not that it signifies much, since the Tories could not take office with any chance of holding it, but the mere failure would offend Gladstone, and even that would be a comfort.

"I have no better news to send for this, and am low, low!

"Don't forget to send me 'Maga' for this month—April.

"Have you read Dickens' new serial, and what do you say to it? I am curious to hear.

"We have a report here from Greece that the English Sec. of Legation and a whole picnic party have been captured by the brigands, and an immense ransom demanded."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *April* 23, 1870.

"The blow has fallen at last, and I am desolate. My poor darling was taken from me at two this morning, without suffering. It seems to me as if years had gone over since she smiled her last good-bye to me. All the happiness of my life has gone, and all the support. God's greatest

mercy would be to take me from a life of daily looking back, which is all that remains to me now.

"You are, I feel, a true friend who will feel for my great sorrow, and I write this as to one who will pity me."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *May* 28, 1870.

"Though I cannot read your note by any other light than an affectionate desire to be of service to *me*, veiled under the notion that I could be of any use to *you;* and though I say I see all this, and see besides how little capable I now am of even a weak effort, I accept your offer and write at once for leave of absence, which, between ourselves, I do not think would be accorded me if it was guessed that I intended to visit Greece. Indeed I *know* that Mr Gladstone's Hellenism is calculated on at Athens to sustain the Greek government through anything that the public opinion of Europe would be likely to submit to.[1]

"Erskine is an old friend of mine, but he is a very self-contained and reserved fellow, who will reveal nothing, and I would be glad of some Greek introductions to any persons not officially bound to

[1] Mr Blackwood proposed that Lever should pay a visit to Greece, for the purpose of making investigations about an act of brigandage which had shocked the civilised world. A party of English tourists, which included Lord and Lady Muncaster, had been seized by brigands at Oropos, near Marathon. During the course of the negotiations for the ransom of the tourists, some members of the British Legation at Athens had been murdered. Many influential Greeks were conniving at the act of brigandage, and matters were at this time in a very disturbed condition in high quarters.—E. D.

sustain the Queen's Cabinet. My wish would be to take the Constantinople boat that leaves on Saturday next, the 4th, and reaches Athens on Thursday following, 9th; but if my leave is not accorded me by telegraph I cannot do this, and there is only *one* boat in the week. I have to-day seen a private telegram from M. W——, the Greek Minister to the Austrian government here, saying that he is on the track of this most infamous outrage, and that if his suspicion prove true, some men of political eminence will have to fly from Greece for ever.

"I cannot thank you enough for your kind and affectionate remembrance of me: it is very dear to me such friendship in this dark hour of my life. There is something gone wrong with the action of my heart, and I have short moments when it seems disposed to give in,—and indeed I don't wonder at it.

"As there would be no time to send me letters here in reply to this, write to me addressed British Legation, Athens—that is, taking for granted that I shall start on Saturday next."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *June* 4, 1870.

"I have looked out anxiously for a note from you these last couple of days. I hope you got my telegram safely. Yesterday I received a telegraphic despatch from F. O. saying my 'leave was granted,' and I sail now in two hours. If I find that my heart disturbance — which has been very severe

the last couple of days—increases on me, I shall stop at Corfu and get back again at my leisure. I do not know if there is much to be learned at Athens that Erskine has not either gleaned or *muddled*, but I will try and ascertain where the infamy began.

"I used once to think that the most sorrowful part of leaving home was the sad heart I left behind me. I know now that there is something worse than that—it is to carry away the sadness of a desolate heart with me.

"I believe the post leaves Athens for the Continent on Saturdays: if so, and that I arrive safely on Thursday 9th, I shall write to you by that mail.

"My affectionate remembrances to Mrs Blackwood."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Athens, Hôtel d'Angleterre, *June* 9, 1870.

"Here I am, in poor Vyner's quarters: but short as the time is since my arrival, it has taught me that there is nothing, or next to nothing, to be learned. The amount of lying here beats Banagher —indeed all Ireland. However, I will try and make a *résumé* of the question that will be readable and, if I can, interesting.

"I am a good deal fagged, but not worse for my journey, and, on the whole, stronger than when I started.

"I thought I should have had some letter from you here, but possibly there has not been time.

"If Lord Carnarvon knew of my direct source of information it would be of great use; for the Legation and Finlay, whom I have seen, are simply men defending a thesis, and so far not to be relied on."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"ATHENS, *June* 17, 1870.

"I send you a hurried line to catch F. O. messenger, who is just leaving. I want merely to say that I have got together a considerable number of facts about brigandage altogether, and the late misfortune in particular, and only wait till I get back to put them into shape. Keep me a corner, then, not for next No. but August, and I hope I shall send something readable.

"I have met much courtesy and civility here, but I am dying to get home. My palpitations still trouble me, and if I don't actually faint, I suppose it is that I don't know how.

"I have been anxiously looking out for letters from you, and now I am off to Corinth, and shall work my way back through the islands.

"Do you know that if any of the blunders had failed, these poor fellows would now have been alive! and even with the concurring mistakes of [?], Erskine, and [?], they would not have succeeded if the rains had not swollen the streams and made them unfordable. It is the saddest story of cross-purposes and stupidities I ever listened to in my life."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *June* 30, 1870.

"I have just reached home, and send you at once what I have done, and what may still require a page or two to complete. Not knowing where your uncle is, and not liking to incur the delay of sending on a wrong errand if he should have left London, I hope he may like what I have written, which, whether good or bad, I can honestly declare has occupied all my sleeping and waking thoughts these last four weeks, insomuch that I have never looked at the [? proofs] of a story[1] that must begin next August *à contrat*, and for which I can feel neither interest nor anxiety. Indeed, I am in every way 'at the end of my tether,' and the sooner I shut up altogether the better will it be for that very little scrap of reputation which I once acquired.

"I am very 'shaky' in health, but very happy to be again at home with my dear girls, who never weary of kindnesses to me, and who would give me comfort if I could be comforted."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 1, 1870.

"Your letter just reached me by a late post as I was sending off this packet. I write a line to thank you, and say how happy it made me to see your handwriting again.

"My daughters find me looking much better for

[1] 'Lord Kilgobbin.'

my journey, and certainly my heart symptoms are greatly diminished.

"It is quite true 'this Greek story is a very strange one'; whether we ever shall get to the bottom of it is very doubtful. I believe the present Cabinet in Greece are dealing fairly with Erskine now,—partly from a hope that it is the best policy—partly from believing that England will resent heavily any attempt at evasion. Of Noel I have great distrust; he has been brought up amongst Greeks—and even Greek brigands—of whom he speaks in terms of eulogy and warmth that are (with our late experiences) positively revolting.

"I hope you will like what I have written. I have given it my whole thought and attention, and for the last four weeks neither talked, reflected, or speculated on anything but the Marathon disaster. I saw Finlay, who is very old and feeble, and I thought mentally so too.

"I wonder will the new Secretary at F. O. act energetically about Greece? I have grave doubts that Gladstone will make conciliation the condition of his appointment. We are in a position to do whatever we like: the difficulty is to know what that should be. To cause the misfortune [?], the blunders of [?] & Co. would not have succeeded without the heavy rain that made the rivers impassable and retarded the movements. In fact, such a combination of evil accidents never was heard of, and had anybody failed in anything they did, the poor fellows would now be living.

"I am glad to think Oliphant will come back to the world again,—these genial fellows are getting too rare to spare one of the best of them to barbarism. I should like to meet him again."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 9, 1870.

"I have just received your cordial note, and write at once to say how sorry I am not to be able to do a sketch of Lord C[larendon]. First of all, I have not anything that could serve to remind me of his career. I know he was a Commissioner of Customs in Ireland, an Ambassador in Spain, and a Viceroy in Dublin, but there ends my public knowledge of him. Personally I only remember him as a very high-bred and courteous gentleman, who made a most finished manner do service for wit (which he had not), and a keen insight into life, especially foreign life, of which he really only knew the conventional part. If I had the materials for his biography I would not hesitate about the sketch, but it is as well (for *you*) that I have not, for I should not do it well, and we should both of us be sorry at the failure.

"I'll tell you, however, who could and would do it well, Rob. Lytton, who married his niece, and is now at Knebworth. *He* knew Lord C. intimately, and had exactly that sort of appreciation of him that the public would like and be pleased to see in print.

"I don't think Dickens' memory is at all served by this ill-judged adulation. He was a man of

genius and a loyal, warm-hearted, good fellow; but he was not Shakespeare, nor was Sam Weller Falstaff.

"I hope you will like my Greek paper. I cannot turn my mind to anything else, and must add some pages when I see the proof. I hear there will be no Greek debate, as all parties are agreed not to discuss Lord C.'s absurd concession about the ship of war to take off the brigands,—a course which would have given Russia such a handle for future meddling, and left us totally unable to question it.

"My journey has certainly done me good. My flurried action of the heart has greatly left me, and except a sense of deep dreariness and dislike to do anything—even speak—I am as I used to be.

"I'd say time would do the rest if I did not hope for something more merciful than time and that shall anticipate time: I mean rest—long rest."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*Aug.* 4, 1870.

"I was conning over the enclosed O'D. when your letter came this morning,—and of late the post misses three days in five,—and I believe I should have detained my MS. for further revision, but I cannot delay my deepest thanks for your munificent remittance. I have not now to be told so to feel how much more you were thinking of me than of Greece when you advised this journey. Be assured that in the interest you felt for me in my great sorrow I grew to have a care for life

and a desire to taste its friendships that I didn't think my heart was capable of. I know well, too well, that I could not have written anything that could justify such a mission—least of all with a breaking heart and an aching head,—but I was sure that in showing you how willing I was to accept a benefit at your hands I should best prove what a value I attached to your friendship, and how ready I was to owe you what brought me round to life and labour again. I do fervently hope the Greek article may be a success; but nothing that it could do, nor anything that I might yet write, could in any way repay what I am well content should be my great debt to your sterling affection for me,—never to be acquitted—never forgotten."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Aug.* 7, 1870.

"I am full sure that nothing but war will now be talked, and so I send another bellicose 'O'Dowd' to make up the paper. I hope there may be time for a proof; but if not, my hand is so well known to you now, and you are so well aware of what I intended where I blotch or break down, it is of less consequence.

"This Wissembourg battle was really a great success; and I don't care a rush that the Prussians were in overwhelming numbers. May they always be so, and may those rascally French get so palpably, unmistakably licked that all their lying press will be unable to gloss over the disgrace.

"If L. Nap. gets *one* victory he'll go in for peace and he'll have England to back him; and I pray, therefore, that Prussia may have the first innings, and I think *Paris* will do the rest by sending the Bonapartes to the devil."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Aug.* 14.

"An idea has just occurred to me, and on telling it to my daughters they wish me to consult with you on it. It is of a series of papers, the *rationale* of which is this:—

"All newspaper correspondence from the war being interdicted, or so much restricted as to be of little value, I have thought that a mock narrative following events closely, but with all the licence that an unblushing liar might give himself, either as to the facts or the persons with whom he is affecting intimacy, and this being done by Major M'Caskey, would be rather good fun. I would set out by explaining how he is at present at large and unemployed, making the whole as a personal narrative, and showing that in the dearth of real news he offers himself as a military correspondent, whose qualifications include not only special knowledge of war, but a universal acquaintance with all modern languages, and the personal intimacy of every one from the King of Prussia to Mr Cook the excursionist. This is enough for a mere glimpse of the intention, which, possibly, is worth consideration. Turn it over in your mind and say has it enough in it to recom-

mend it? I know all will depend on how it is done, and I have no sanguine trust in myself now, either for nerve or 'go,' and still less for rattling adventures, but yet the actual events would be a great stimulant, and perhaps they might supply some of the missing spirit I am deploring.

"I don't know that I should have written about this *now*, but the girls have given me no peace since I first talked of it, and are eternally asking have I begun Major M'Caskey's adventures. Your opinion shall decide if it be worth trial."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*Aug.* 29, 1870.

"A post that takes seven days (and travels, I believe, over Berlin and part of Pomerania) before it reaches Vienna, warns me to be early, and so I despatch these two O'Ds. to see if you like them as part of next month's envoy.

"Of course, people will admit of no other topic than the war or the causes of it. As the month goes on new interests may arise, and we shall be on the watch for them.

"Be assured 'The Standard' is making a grave blunder by its anti-Germanism, and English opinion has *just now* a value in Germany which, if the nation be once disgusted with us, will be lost for ever.

"Even Mr Whitehurst of 'The Daily Telegraph' gives the Emperor up, and how he defers his abdication after such a withdrawal of confidence is not easy to say.

"I don't suspect that the supremacy of Prussia

will be unmitigated gain to us—far from it; but we shall not be immediate sufferers, and we shall at least have the classic comfort of being the 'last devoured.'

"I hope you gave Lord Lytton and myself the credit (that is due to us) of prophesying this war."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*Sept.* 1, 1870.

"I have so full a conviction of *your* judgment and such a thorough distrust of my own, that I send you a brief bit of M'Caskey *for your opinion.* If you like it, if you think it is what it ought to be and the sort of thing to take, just send me one line by telegraph to say 'Go on.' I shall continue the narrative in time to reach you by the 18th at farthest, and enough for a paper. Remember this—the *real war narrative* is already given and will continue to be given by the newspapers, and it is only by a *mock* personal narrative, with the pretentious opinions of this impudent blackguard upon all he sees, hears, or meets with, that I could hope for any originality.

"My eldest daughter is very eager that I should take your opinion at once, and I am sure you will not think anything of the trouble I am giving you for both our sakes."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Sept.* 2, 1870.

"What a kind thought it was to send me the slip with Corkhardt's paper! It is excellent fun,

and I send it to-day to the Levant to a poor banished friend on a Greek island.

"I regard the nation that thrashes France with the same sort of gratitude I feel for the man who shoots a jaguar. It is so much done in the interests of all humanity, even though it be only a blackguard or a Bismarck who does it.

"I send you an O'D. to make enough for a short paper with the other sent on Monday last.

"I sent your uncle a specimen page of M'Caskey, but by bad luck I despatched it on my birthday, the 31st August,[1] and, of course, it will come to no good. It was Dean Swift's custom to read a certain chapter of Job on his birthday, wherein the day is cursed that a man-child was born. I don't go that far, but I have a very clear memory of a number of mishaps (to give them a mild name) which have taken this occasion to date from. It would be very grateful news to me to learn I was not to see 'another return of the happy event,' but impatience will serve me little, and I must wait till I'm asked for."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Sept.* 11, 1870.

"Since I got your 'go on' I have never ceased writing about M'Caskey. Upon you I throw all the responsibility, the more as it has very nearly turned my *own* brain with its intrinsic insanity. As I got

[1] The statement here as to his birthday is sufficiently explicit. See vol. i. p. 2.—E. D.

the credit of reviewing 'Lothair,' I am determined to say that these papers were written by Colonel Humbug!

"I suppose I have sent you fully enough for the present month; and if you will write me one line to say you wish it, I will set to work at once at the next part and to the extent you dictate.

"Pray look fully to the corrections, and believe me [to be] not very sane or collected."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Sept.* 13, 1870.

"The post, which failed completely yesterday, brought me your three proofs to-day. I now send a short, but not sweet, O'Dowd on 'Irish Sympathy' (whose correction you must look to for me), but which is certainly the best of the batch.

"I had hoped to have heard you mention the receipt of M'Caskey, whose revelations on the war will only be of value if given at once. I also sent off some additional matter for M'C. on Sunday last, and hope they have arrived safely.

"I wish you would send me 'John' as a whole. If you should do so, send it to F. O., to the care of F. Alston, Esq., to be forwarded to me. I do not know of any novel-writer I like so well as Mrs. O., and if I could get her to write her name in any of her books for me I'd treasure it highly. She is the most womanly writer of the age, and has all the delicacy and decency one desires in a woman."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Sept.* 14, 1870.

"My sincere thanks for your note and its enclosure. It seems to me that I do nothing but get money from you. I suspect, however, that you will soon be freed from your pensioner. I am breaking fast, and as really the wish to live on has left me, my friends will not grudge me going to my rest.

"I am indeed glad that you like the O'Ds. I tear at least three for one I send you, being more than ever fearful of that 'brain-breakdown' than I am of a gorged lung or a dropsical heart.

"From your telegram about M'Caskey, I was disposed to think you wished *the contribution for the October No.*, and set to work at once to send another batch. I do not now understand whether this is your intention. Of course (if possible) it were all the better it were begun immediately, because in the next part I could bring him up to recent events, and make his impatient comments on actual occurrences more outrageously pretentious and extravagant. You will tell me what you intend when you write.

"Some Hungarians—great swells in their own land—have been here, and are pressing the girls and myself to go to them a bit. It would be a great boon to my poor daughters, and for them I would try it if I could, but I have no heart for it. There was a time a month on the Danube would have been a great temptation to me.

"I will tell Syd to write to you, and you're lucky if she does not do so with an MS."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Sept.* 16, 1870.

"The war interruption delayed your proof, which only reached me this morning, and as the second part must be in your hands before this, I am hopeful that it will all appear in October No., so that by the No. in November I may bring things down to the actual date of passing events. I wish this because I know that the *apropos* will be the chief merit of the whole.

"When I can get him into diplomatic correspondence about the Peace, &c., I think there should be some good fun; but I shall not go on till I hear from you or see that this is out, as I always do best on the spur of publication.

"This dictating to the King of Prussia how he ought to make peace, when none of us saw or presumed to say how he should have made war, is to me insufferable; and the simple question, 'How much moderation would France have had had she reached Berlin?' settles the whole dispute. The insolent defiance of the Parisians within about a week of eating each other is a proof that these people may be thrashed and scourged, but the outrageous self-sufficiency cannot be squeezed out of them. I have not a shadow of pity for them, and it is without any remorse that I see them going headlong to—Bismarck!

"Victor Hugo's address to the Germans beats not only Banagher, but beats Garibaldi in high-flown absurdity. Dear me! to think what old age can do for a man! What a warning to us

small folk when we see a really great head come to such Martin Tupperism as this. Perhaps, however, it is a law of nature, and that poets, like plums, should be taken before they drop.

"Let me have even one line from you if I'm to go on with M'C."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Sept.* 21, 1870.

"In the hope that M'Caskey has reached in time and makes his bow next month, and seeing that as events go fast he must stir himself to keep up with them, I have never quitted him since I wrote. I therefore send off two chapters, whose headings I defer till I see the print, and will, if you approve, bring him up to Sedan in the ensuing parts for the November No.

"The absurd idea has got such hold of me that I cannot free myself of it even for a moment, and if the reader only catches my *intention* the thing will have a chance of success. In fact, I want to try a mild and not *offensive* quiz on all 'sensational' reporting. M'Caskey, fortunately, is a fine lay figure for such humbug, and being already in part known through 'Tony Butler,' needs no introduction.

"I do not, honestly speaking, know whether the notion is a good one, or whether I am doing the thing well or ill; my only guide (and it once was a safe one) is the pleasure I feel in the writing, and this though I am in no small bodily pain, and cannot get one night's rest in four—a great

drawback to a poor devil whose stronghold was sleep through everything!

"Do write to me. I cannot tell you the amount of direction and comfort your letters give me."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Sept.* 30, 1870.

"I am disappointed on hearing that M'Caskey does not appear this month, and perhaps more so because I concur in the reasons for the postponement. I suppose, however, that once the great tension we now feel about these events is relieved, even by a short interval, we shall not be reprehended for the small levities which we extend to certain people and situations, by no means among the most serious interests of the hour.

"Of course I am sorry not to be in England at this time. There is scarcely a telegram of the day without its suggestion; but I have less regrets as I think how feeble and broken I am, and how low and depressed I feel, even at the tidings that might rally and cheer me.

"I am greatly gratified by your message from Mrs Oliphant, and I shall treasure a book from her hand as a very precious possession. She is a charming writer, and carries me along with her in all her sympathies; and I shall never forget the pleasure her books gave to the sick-bed wherein all my hopes rested."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 22, 1870.

"As I am fairly knocked up at last—my malady making fierce way with me within the last week or so—I send you what I have done of M'Caskey. You will see that I have adhered to the *actual* incidents of the campaign, though I fear I have not been remarkable for a truthful construction of them. When I see this in print, and hear what you say of it, I shall be better able, and perhaps stronger, to deal with it.

"From four o'clock I cannot sleep with pain, and to a sea-calf like myself, who requires about a double measure of sleep, you may imagine the injury.

"The ladies' wardrobe seized at Worth is a pure fact, and mentioned by 'The Times,' &c.

"If I could have counted on a little health and strength, I'd have asked you to let me translate the plays of Terence for your Ancient Classics. I have some trick of dialogue, and used to enjoy the 'Adrian' as much as one of Molière's. I cannot now dream of this: my own comedy has come to the fifth act, and I actually am impatient for the fall of the curtain."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Nov.* 8, 1870.

"From a line in a newspaper I learned the great disaster that had befallen you, and felt for you with all my heart. It is a true consolation, the thought that those we love are in every way more

mercifully dealt with by removal, and I have that feeling as the stronghold of my own poor support —after years of struggle with what could not be cured; but still the grief is *there*, and only time makes us able to reason with it. I am shamed when I read your letters to perceive how much I must have talked of my own health. I try at home to skulk the subject, but I see I am not so successful when I sit down to my desk. I am failing very fast, strength and spirits are going together, and I really see no reason to wish it otherwise. I only pray that with such faculties as I have I may live on to the end, and that the end may not be far off. My dear girls are doing all that they can think of to make my life easy and comfortable, and when I am free from pain I try to occupy myself and take interest in what I am doing.

"I had intended to wait your proof before sending a short additional part of M'Caskey, but if I have it ready, I believe I shall send it at once. Of course the proof will depend on you. I strongly suspect that Bismarck was endeavouring to get up a *querelle d'Allemand* with us about neutrality, which certainly carried the nation with him, and might be found useful when, at the close of the war, he either determined to take Luxembourg or assume towards England a defiance—which, without some pretext, would have been impolitic, if not impossible. He has certainly so far worked on the German mind as to make them regard the splendid munificence of England with distrust and almost dislike. With all this, it was a gross stupidity

of the Tories to be French in their sympathies, but certainly the readiness with which they made a wrong choice where there is an alternative looks like something more than German.

"It does seem scant justice to make a whole people responsible for the inflated rubbish of Victor Hugo, but still, any one that knows France, knows that this senseless bravado is exactly what supplies the peculiar spirit of the nation, and that nearly all that dash and *élan* which is accepted as irresistible was only unconquerablė by our own consent, and by a sort of conventional agreement.

"I think I remember Mr Wynne, a nice fellow, but an atrocious whist player. I have some dim recollection of having abused his play, and I hope he has lived to forgive me and can bear to think of me without malice.

"I wish I had had his campaigning opportunities, —not that I have the most fragmentary faculty of observation, but there is a colour and a keeping over all that one calls up in memory, which nothing replaces, and certainly Major M'Caskey would have been not only 'circumstantial' but occasionally 'correct' if he had known how. I thought I was imagining a very boastful and pretentious rascal, who had few scruples in assuring himself to be a man of genius and a hero, but I have just read the new preface to 'Lothair,' and I actually feel Major M'Caskey to be a diffident and retiring character, very slow to put forward a claim to any superiority, and on the whole reluctant to take any credit for his own abilities."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Nov.* 11, 1870.

"While waiting for the proof of M'C. I finish the part for December. I now suspect that the war will go on to an attack on Paris, and mean to bring the next No. up to the *actual* events of the day. It is only by exhibiting him as an audacious liar that his impertinences on the correspondent class could be tolerated, but they will surely not be touchy at being called to account by such a critic.

"The Imperial correspondence now published shows it is scarcely possible to invent anything too bold or too outrageous for belief, and the absolute vulgarity of the State contrivances and expedients is not the least remarkable part of the whole. If I ever get to the diplomacies of the war I shall have some fun.

"Of course the present part must look to yourself for correction.

"'The Observer' has a short notice of M'C. this week, and 'The Sun' another and more civil.

"Have you seen that the Emperor in his pamphlet endorses the very strategy recommended by M'Caskey—the attack on Central Germany?"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Nov.* 14.

"It is not fair to pelt you with my 'letters' as well as my 'literature,' and you may reasonably claim some immunity on the former score.

"I remember a very important Englishwoman—she wrote a book called 'The Unprotected Female in Norway'—once stopping me in the street on the ground that 'no introduction was necessary, as I was *a public man.*'

"I send you back M'C., which reads in places so like reality; but on the whole I think it will do, and hope you think so too.

"Sir H. Seymour writes me word that he believes he is going to succeed to Lord Hertford's Irish estates, a bagatelle of £70,000 per an.! I know of none more deserving of good fortune.

"'John' reached me after my note was closed, with a charming note from Mrs O.

"Have you heard—that is, have I told you—that the 'Neue Presse of Vienna' quotes M'Caskey as a veritable correspondent? But the General Brialmont did more. In his 'Life of Napoleon' he states, 'Mon. Charles O'Malley raconte que,' &c., &c."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Nov.* 20, 1870.

"There is a new complication, and for *us* I suspect a worse one than all—a Russian war! I believe that every one abroad knew that if even France had not the worst of it, the mere fact of her having gone through a stiff campaign, and been crippled of men and money by the effort, would have suggested to the Russians that *now* was the time to deal with 'the sick man.' The inducement on seeing France totally disabled was too tempting, and they have denounced the treaty

which they had determined not to assail before next spring.

"You know better than I do what people at home are disposed to do, and what's more, what they *can* do. By the newspapers I gather that at last the English people are aware that they have no army; and as a fleet, even if it floats, cannot fight on dry land, we are comparatively powerless in ourselves. Of course we could subsidise, but whom? Not the Austrians, though I see all the correspondents say so, and even tell the number they could bring into the field and the places they would occupy, &c.: and our Ambassador at Vienna, I hear, writes home most cheery accounts of the Austrian resources. Now I *know* that if Austria were to move to-morrow, her Slavic population, quite entirely in the hands and some in the pay of Russia, would rise and dismember the empire. Imagine Fenianism not only in Meath and Kerry but in Norfolk, Yorkshire, and Kent, and then you can have some idea of the danger of provoking such a rebellious element as the Austrian Greek.

"A friend just arrived from Florence tells me that the King made an ostentatious display of his cordiality to the Turkish Minister a few nights ago, and that we can have 150,000 Italians to come down to such assistance. Perhaps to accept the help might be regarded as a compromise by the Peace party in England. It is like the very small child of the unchaste young lady.

"A Cabinet courier went through here to-day

for Constantinople, *the Danube route being judged no longer safe*, which is very significant: but what are we to do?

"Have you reviewed Henry Bulwer's 'Life of Palmerston'? I hear it very well spoken of. Bulwer has all the astuteness to relish the *raserie* of Pam, and I understand what the world at last sees was his mock geniality. But what would we not give to have Lord Palmerston back again, and some small respect felt abroad for the sentiment and wishes of England!"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Dec.* 4, 1870.

"I am so convinced of your better judgment, that when I differ from you I am ready to withdraw a favour and take your verdict. In the present case you will, however, see that 'Pall Mall' of the 29th has ventured on 'quizzing' war incidents and correspondents as freely, and I don't think more successfully, than myself.

"At all events, you are the only competent judge of the matter, and I can't move pleas in demurrer, and if it be not safe, don't print him or use him.

"I only write a very hurried line to say so much, and now go back to a sofa again, for I am crippled with gout and worse — if there be a worse.

"I am not up to writing: the last thing I had done was an 'interview' of M'C. with the Emperor at Metz, and it is dangerously near the waste-paper basket at this writing."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Dec.* 22, 1870.

"I am so low and *découragé* that I have little heart to send you the two O'Ds. that go with this.

"The Gortschakoff one is, I think, smart; the other is only original. If the world should offer, meanwhile, matter for a third, I'll try and take it *toute fois* if it be that you like and approve of these.

"I am going more rapidly downward than before. I suppose I shall run on to spring, or near it. Though, like Thompson's argument for lying in bed, 'I see no motive for rising,' I am quite satisfied to travel in the other direction.

"I don't wonder that the British world is growing French in sympathy. The Prussians are doing their very utmost to disgust Europe, and with a success that cannot be disputed.

"I hope, if you in England mean war with Russia, that you do not count on Austria. She will not, because she cannot, help you; and a Russian war would mean here dismemberment of the empire and utter ruin. If Austria were beaten, the German provinces would become Prussian; if she were victorious, Hungary would dominate over the empire and take the supremacy at once. Which would be worse? I really cannot say."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Dec.* 29, 1870.

"I give you all my thanks for your kind letter, which, owing to the deep snow in Styria, only reached me to-day. I am, of course, sorry the world will not see the fun of M'Caskey as do the Levers, but it is no small consideration to me to be represented in that minority so favourably.

"Poor Anster used to tell of an Irish fortune so 'tied up' by law that it could not be untied, and left the heirs to die in the poorhouse. Perhaps my drollery in the M'Caskey legend is just as ingeniously wrapped up, and that nothing can find it. At all events, I have no courage to send you any more of him.

"I am told (authoritatively) that Paris will give in on the 15th January, but I scarcely believe it. The Germans have perfectly succeeded in making themselves thoroughly unpopular through Europe, and this mock anger with England is simply contemptible. If this insolence compels us to have a fleet and an army, we shall have more reason to be grateful to than angry with them; but how hard either with Childers or Cardwell? and how to get rid of the Whigs?

"Gladstone's letter to the Pope would be a good subject to 'O'Dowd,' but I cannot yet hit on the way. It is, however, a little absurd for a Minister to be so free of his outlying sympathies when he is bullied by America, bearded by Russia, and Bismarcked to all eternity.

"I am glad to hear of Oliphant. It gives great

interest to the correspondence to remember a friend's hand in it.

"I have been always forgetting to ask you about Kinglake. A bishop who came through here said he had died last autumn. Surely this is not true. I hope not most sincerely."

XXI.

TRIESTE.

1871.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Feb.* 15, 1871.

"I am now on my twelfth day in bed, somewhat better at last, but very low and depressed. I had, before I was struck down, begun an 'O'Dowd,' but how write for a public that buys 150,000 copies of 'Dame Europa's School'! Is there any use in inventing epigrams for such an auditory? To-morrow is the black day of the post, and can bring me no letter, or I should not bore you with this."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Fiume Istrica, *Feb.* 28, 1871.

"Your kind letter and its enclosure reached me safely here, where I have been sent to refit. I believe the word suits, as I have got fluid in my pericardium, and my condition is therefore one of being water-logged, which means unseaworthy, but not yet gone down.

"The Gladstone request to Robinson to falsify the date of his letter is too atrocious; and as the 'O'Dowds' are made of certain subtle analysis, this case cannot be so treated, there being fortunately no parallel instance to put against it.

"As to old Russell: he was instructed to bark, and he went farther, and growled; but as Bismarck knew he was muzzled, there came nothing of it.

"My impression is the Turks are going to throw us over and make alliances with Russia, and seeing how utterly powerless we are, small blame to them. England is rapidly coming to the condition of Holland. I think another fifty years will do it, and instead of the New Zealander, a Burgomaster will sit on London Bridge and bob for eels in the muddy Thames.

"So you mean to be in town this April? Not that I have any hope of meeting you. Tell Mrs Blackwood for me how glad I should be to spoil her breakfast once more!"

To Dr Burbidge.

"TRIESTE, *March* 26, 1871.

"Your letter found me at Rome, where I had been sent for a change of air. It was my first visit to Sydney since her marriage, and I enjoyed myself much, and threw off my cough, and could get up stairs without blowing like a grampus.

"I cannot tell you how sincerely I thank you for your letters. I know of no man but yourself from whom I should have liked to have letters

on the same theme, and if my illness did not make me as reflective as you hoped for, your letter has given me much thought.

"It is easy enough for a man to mistake deep dejection for reflection, and so far I might have deceived myself, for I have been depressed to a state I never knew till now.

"I am cared for and watched and loved as much as is possible for a man to be, and all the while I am companionless. The dear friend who was with me through every hour of my life is gone, and I have no heart for any present [? or future] occupation without her. My impatience is even such, that I do not like those signs of returning health that promise to keep me longer here; and I trust more complacently in breaking up than in anything. With all this, your letter has been a great—the greatest—comfort I have yet felt, and your affection is very dear to me. I think I know how only such warm friendship would have taken the tone and the words you use, and it comes to me like water to a man thirsting."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Wednesday, March* 29.

"I believe what I now send you is good, but I will not be certain till I hear you are of the same mind. The truth is, I am so broken in courage as well as health, that it is only the continued insistence of my daughters drives me to the desk at all, and they are perhaps only minded

thereto by seeing the deep depression in which I live, and which they ascribe to idleness.

"I hope at all events to hear from you soon, with tidings of the great paper, and if soon after with proof of the present, *tant mieux.*

"I believe I have seen my last of London, and I am sorry for it, and sorrier not to see you again, —not but I feel you would scarce care to meet me, depressed and low-spirited as I am now.

"I have just seen the aide-de-camp the Emperor here sent to Berlin, and who had a confidential interview with Bismarck.

"The Prussians are furious with us, and not over friendly with Russia. Bismarck even said that if Austria should be attacked by Russia they will stand by her, but not support her in any aggressive policy. He added, 'Do what you like with Turkey, but don't interfere with the German rights on the Danube.'"

"If Bright had been still in the Ministry I could have understood Henry Bulwer being made a peer as a subtle attack on the House of Lords. What it means now I cannot guess.

"If I was not an official with a uniform and a quarter day (both d—d shabby), I'd make an O'D. on the Princess's marriage in this way. The Queen, seeing the impossibility of elevating English democracy, sees that she has but one other thing to do, which is to come down to it. This is like old Sheridan, when appealed to by a drunken man in the gutter, 'Lift me up, lift me,' replying, 'I can't lift you up, but I'll lie down beside you.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *April* 16, 1871.

"I have got a short leave, and having determined to venture on the road, I mean to start on Wednesday, and, if I can, reach town by Saturday next. My plan is—as I want to go over to Ireland—to do my 'Irishries' until such time as you arrive in London, where, I need not say, I have no object more at heart than to meet you and Mrs Blackwood.

"If I could manage a rapid run south and west in Ireland, I'll try what I could do as 'A Last Glimpse of Ireland,' and only wish I had a little more strength and more spirit for the effort.

"Write me a line to meet me in town (at Burlington Hotel) to say when I may hope to see you—to see you both, I mean."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"[? London] *Tuesday, April* 25, 1871.

"What with being nearly driven over ten times a-day, and the certainty of being over-dinnered at night, I have a perilous time of it here.

"I was delighted to get your cordial note, and more so to count upon seeing you so soon, and I hope, too, Mrs Blackwood with you. My plans are to visit Ireland at once, so as to have as much of London as I can when you shall have arrived.

"How I would wish to have you over with me in Ireland, but I suppose the thing is impossible.

"I have got an autumn invitation to Sir Healy

Maxwell, and if we could manage it perhaps we could then make a little Killarney excursion together. *Nous en parlerons!*

"I wish I may see and be able to record something in my new ramble worth sending to 'Maga,' —at least I will try.

"They tell me here that the Tories might come in at any moment by a snap vote with the Radicals, but that they are too wise to be tempted.

"I hear that Tichborne is certain to win his suit: indeed fabulous odds are laid in his favour."

To Mr Alexander Spencer.

"Garrick Club, London, *April* 25, 1871.

"I am here in the midst of civilities and attentions more than enough to turn my poor head; but I mean to run over to Ireland and be there on Sunday next, and, if not inconvenient, would ask you to tell Morrison's people to keep a room for me as low down—that is, with as few steps to mount—as they can, always provided that the room be large and airy. I intend to take some hurried rambles through the south and west to refresh memories and lay in new stores, if I can."

Lever arrived in Ireland at the end of April. He was in excellent spirits, and apparently in a more even frame of mind than he had been during his previous visit. Again he found himself in a vortex of dining, whisting, talking, and laughter. Lord Spencer, who was Viceroy of Ireland at this period, made the author of 'Lord Kilgobbin' his

guest for some days at the Viceregal Lodge. Lever "charmed and entertained" Lord and Lady Spencer. Bishops, military folk, judges, doctors, professors, vied with each other for the privilege of securing the novelist's company at dinner-tables and receptions. Morrison's hotel, where he had engaged rooms, was besieged by callers. One of these gives a very pleasant glimpse of the Irish novelist. "I found him seated," he says, "at an open window, a bottle of claret at his right hand and the proof-sheets of 'Lord Kilgobbin' before him. It was a beautiful morning of May: the hawthorns in the College park were just beginning to bloom. . . . He looked a hale, hearty, laughter-loving man of sixty. There was mirth in his grey eye, joviality in the wink that twittered on his eyelid, saucy humour in his smile, and *bon mot*, wit, and rejoinder in every movement of his lips. His hair, very thin but of a silky brown, fell across his forehead, and when it curtained his eyes he would jerk back his head—this, too, at some telling crisis in a narrative. . . . He made great use of his hands, which were small and white and delicate as those of a woman. He threw them up in ecstasy or wrung them in mournfulness—just as the action of the moment demanded. . . . He was somewhat careless in his dress, but clung to the traditional high shirt-collar. . . . 'I stick to my Irish shoes,' he said. 'There is no shoe in the world—or no accent either—equal to the Irish brogue.'"

Trinity College decided to confer upon him the title of Doctor of Laws—the actual bestowal of the title did not take place until July—and played whist with him. The University Club gave a dinner in his honour. Standing with his back to a chiffonnier, he remarked to a friend that most of the old faces had disappeared. "You still have some friends at your back," said his companion; and turning to see who they were, the novelist beheld some volumes of his own writings. Taking up 'Harry Lorrequer,' he observed, "A poor thing. How well Phiz illustrated it!"

One of the calls he made during this visit to Dublin was at the house of Sheridan le Fanu. The author of 'Uncle Silas' was in an extra gloomy mood, and he denied himself to his old comrade. He was more fortunate with another friend, Sir William Wilde. Lever was beginning to suffer from dimness of sight. The eminent oculist assured him that there was nothing radically wrong with his eyes—that the difficulty arose out of late suppers.

Every one who met him during his last visit to Dublin declared that 'Lorrequer' had never been so agreeable, so fascinating, so buoyant.

The ramble through the south and west of Ireland was not undertaken. Dublin festivities had weakened the novelist's will. He said good-bye to Ireland in May, and made a short stay in London. He enjoyed again in London the company of all that was bright and lively, himself the brightest and liveliest. He made some heavy

losses at whist, but his ill-luck had a sunny side. It encouraged him to call upon Mr W. H. Smith, whose firm now owned most of his copyrights; and Mr Smith, it is said, gave Lever a very considerable sum of money on account of payments to be made to him for a series of autobiographical prefaces to his novels.

To Mr Alexander Spencer.

"Trieste, *June* 14, 1871.

"It is in no ingratitude for all the hospitalities and courtesies I have lately received that I say I was glad to be once more in my cottage, and back in the calm, quiet, and comfortable little crib I call my home.

"I was present in court at the Tichborne examination of Thursday last, and a more miserable spectacle of evasion, falsehood, and shame I never witnessed; but in these depreciations of the man's character I see no reason to dispute his identity,—on the contrary, the blacker he is, the more, to my thinking, he is a Tichborne. At the same time, juries do not confine themselves to the issue they have to try, but are swayed by moral reasons outside the legal ones, and may in all likelihood scruple to endow with fortune such a palpable scoundrel.

"My last dinner in London was with Ballantine, and he persists in believing the claimant to be the real man; but I do not perceive that he is confident of the verdict."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 2, 1871.

"I am so anxious to be early that I send you the three O'Ds. I have written this very moment. I have finished them, and so near post hour that I have scarce time for a line to say that I am at home again, and have brought back a fair stock of the good health my visit to town gave me, and a large budget of the pleasure and kind flatteries which every one bestowed on me when there,—narratives my daughters delight in, and in which your name and your wife's come in at every moment and to meet all our gratitude in recognition.

"I hope you will like the O'Ds., and think they have not lost in vigour because of my late excesses in turtle and whitebait.

"When you send me a proof, tell me all you think of them, and if anything occurs to me in the meanwhile, I'll speak of it.

"Tichborne I incline to think the real man, and the blacker they make him the more certainly they identify him: so far I regard Coleridge as his best advocate. Of course, I must not speak of the case till it is concluded."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 5, 1871.

"As I had finished the enclosed O'D., I read how Trinity had made me LL.D. The degree must not be exported to me in gratitude. I really believe a large amount of what I have said, which is

more than can be asserted by Tichborne, or the man who says he is Tichborne.

"It is a great grief to me that I cannot say what I think of that curious trial, and all that I should like to say of the solicitor to the Crown's examination; but I see it would be too dangerous, and, to use his own style, I might ask myself, 'Would you not be surprised to hear that an attachment was issued against you?'"

"The hot weather has begun here, and in such honest earnest that I can do nothing but hunt out a dark cool corner and go to sleep.

"I am very sorry not to be in Ireland now, when the [?] have been invited to the Exhibition banquet on the 20th; but I have done with banquets now, and must address myself to my maccaroni with what appetite I may."

To Mr William Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *July* 13, 1871.

"I should have liked to have detained these proofs until I heard what your uncle might have to say to them, but I am afraid of delay, and send them back at once. My hope is that he will like them, though I cannot dare to think that my chief, Lord Granville, will approve of what I say of his speech at the Cobden dinner. At any rate, if they kick me out, I can go home and be a rebel, and if too old for a pike I am still good for a paragraph.

"All that London life with its flatteries and fat-feeding has sorely unfitted me for my cold mutton

existence at home; but it cannot be helped, and I must try to get back into the old groove and work along as before.

"There is now a dull apathy over life—the consequence of all our late excitement; but we cannot always afford to pay for 'stars,' and Bismarck is too costly an *artiste* to keep always on the boards. From all I see, the French are just as insolent and bumptious as before they were licked,—showing us, if we like to see it, what the world would have had to endure had they been the conquerors!

"It is a sore grief to me that I cannot go to the Scott festival; but I have no leave and less money, and though I believe F. O. might grant me the one, they'd even stop my pay, which is the aggravation of insult.

"I hope sincerely you don't feel it a matter of conscience to read all a man writes, for if so I'd shut up. Only assuring you that now we have met and shaken hands, it is with increased pleasure I write myself, yours sincerely, CHAS. LEVER."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Aug.* 5, 1871.

"*En attendant* to writing you a long letter, I send you these 'O'Dowds' now, which will give us more time to discuss them.

"That on our 'National Dotations' is, I hope, good. I know it is called for. The shabby scoundrels from Manchester that want to manage England like a mill and treat the monarch like an overseer deserve castigation, and I feel you

will agree with me. Is not 'Meat without Bone' good enough for use?

"I am so sorry not to be able to say all the civil things I should like to say of the Solicitor-General now, for when the trial is over I shall not be able to revive my generous indignation to the white heat it now enjoys.

"Why don't you tell me some popular theme to O'Dowd? I'm here, as they say in Ireland, 'at the back of good speed,' and know nothing.

"A very curious trial occurred five years ago in Austria on a disputed identity, and the man questioned substantiated his case. It would be interesting if a correct record could be had.

"Ballantine tells me that Jeune is gone to Australia, and will be back in November with proofs of the loss of the *Bella*, names of survivors, and existence in the colony of Arthur Orton up to November last. B. is sure of a verdict—at least, he is sure of his right to it."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Aug.* 5, 1871.

"It is time I should thank you and Mrs Blackwood for your cordial invitation to myself and my daughter to go and see you in Scotland, and we are only too sorry we cannot manage you a visit, and in talk—for it is all that is left us—to ride over the links of Fife, and even assist at golf.

"Even if I could have plucked up courage to go over now, I 'stopped' myself by letting my 'vice' go on leave,—a piece of generosity on my part that

has cost me heavier than I thought for, and gave me nearer opportunities of intimacy with Cardiff captains and Hull skippers than I care for.

"Of course, it is out of the question trying to write except on my 'off days,' when I shut out the whole rabble.

"I begin to think that Gladstone has been carried away by pure anger in all his late doings. It is purely womanish and hysterical throughout. To hit off this I have thrown off the short 'O'Dowd,' 'What if they were to be Court-martialled?' which, with a little change, will perhaps do.

"It is one of those cases which will be as long kept before the public, for it is the attack on a great principle—and in that sense no mere grievance of the hour.

"As a means of lowering the House of Lords—if such was the intention—it has totally failed, and even 'Pall Mall' has come to the side of the Peers, which is significant.

"I see Seymour, my old friend, has got his first verdict in the Hertford case. It is £70,000 a-year at issue, but of course the great battle will be fought before 'the Lords.'"

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Aug.* 17, 1871.

"About half an hour after your pleasant letter and its handsome enclosure reached me, Langford came in. He was on his way to Venice, but, like a good fellow, stopped to dine with myself and daughter.

"We are delighted with him,—not only with his talk about books and writers, Garrick men and reviewers, but with his fine fresh-hearted appreciation of all he sees in his tour. He likes everything, and travels really to enjoy it.

"I wish I knew how to detain him here a little longer; though, God knows, no place nor no man has fewer pretensions to lay an embargo on any one.

"I took him out to see Miramar last evening, and we both wished greatly you had been with us. It was a cool drive of some miles along the Adriatic, with the Dalmatian mountains in front, and to the westward the whole Julian Alps snow-topped and edged. I know you would have enjoyed it.

"I am so glad you like the O'Ds. As I grow older I become more and more distrustful of all I do; in fact, I feel like the man who does not know when he draws on his banker that he may not have overdrawn his account and have his cheque returned. This is very like intellectual bankruptcy, or the dread of it, which is much the same.

"The finest part of Scott's nature to my thinking was the grand heroic spirit — that trumpet-stop on his organ — which elevated our commonplace people and stirred the heart of all that was high-spirited and generous amongst us. It was the anti-climax to our realism and sensationalism—detective Police Literature or Watch-house Romance.

"This was the tone I wanted to see praised and

recommended, and I was sorry to see how little it was touched on. The very influence that a gentleman exerts in society on a knot of inferiors was the sort of influence Scott brought to bear upon the whole nation. All felt that there was at least one there before whom nothing mean or low or shabby should be exhibited."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Aug.* 28, 1871.

"The day after Langford left this, my horse, treading on a sharp stone that cut his frog, fell on me and crushed my foot,—not severely, but enough to bring on the worst attack of gout I ever had in my life, and which all my precautions have only kept down up to this from seizing on the stomach. My foot was about as big and as shapely as Cardwell's head. I am now unable to move, and howl if any one approaches me rashly.

"I told Langford of a curious police trial for swindling here at Vienna—curious as illustrating Austrian criminal procedure, &c. He thought I ought to report it in 'O'Dowd.' I send it off now for your opinion and judgment (and hope favourably). It might want a little retouching here and there, but you will see and say.

"I was delighted with your 'Scott' speech—the best of them of all that I read, and I see it has been copied and recopied largely. Your allusion to Wilson was perfect, and such a just homage to a really great man whom all the Cockneyism in the world cannot disparage.

"I am in such damnable pain that I can hardly write a line, but I want you to see the 'Police' sketch at once. Can I have a proof, if you like it, early? as perhaps when I am able to move I shall have to get to some of the sulphur springs in Styria at once.

"My enemy is now making a demonstration about my left knee, and, as the newspapers say, *La situation est difficile.*

"I am not so ill but that I can desire to be remembered to Mrs Blackwood."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"*Sept.* 9, 1871.

"Between gout and indignation I am half mad. Gladstone at Whitby is worse to me than my swelled ankle, and I send you a furious O'D. to show that the Cabinet are only playing out —where they do not parody—the game of the Communists.

"Whether it will be in time to send me a proof I cannot tell, but you will, I know, take care of me. I feel in writing it as though we had been talking the whole thing together, and that I was merely giving a *résumé* of our gossip.

"Your delightful note and its enclosure have just come. I thank you cordially for both. I have not any recollection of what I said of Scott, but I know what I *feel* about him, and how proud I am that you like my words. I cannot get my foot to the ground yet, but I am rather in vein for writing, as I always am in gout, only my cali-

graphy has got added difficulties from the position I am reduced to.

"I am glad Langford likes us here: my daughters took to him immensely, and only were sorry we saw so little of him. If he has really 'bitten' you with a curiosity to see Miramar I shall bless the day he came here.

"Tell Mrs Blackwood my cabin will be glad to house her here, and if she will only come I'll be her courier over the whole of North Italy."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Sept.* 10, 1871.

"You are right. There is little point—that is, there is no epigram—in the 'Trial.' I wrote it rather to break the monotony of eternal moralisings than with any other object. If it be pleasant reading I am content, and, I hope, so are you.

"I sent yesterday a hard-hitting O'D. on 'How Gladstone is doing the Work of the Commune,' and I send you now, I think, a witty comparison between the remaining troopers and the Whigs. My daughter thinks it the smartest bit of fun I have done since I had the gout last, and all the salt in it comes unquestionably from that source.

"All the names in the 'Trial' are authentic. The lady is really the grand-daughter of Hughes Ball (the celebrated Golden Ball); and the man's assertion of being 'Times' correspondent was accepted as an unquestionable fact.

"I have made superhuman efforts to be legible in this 'O'Dowd' now, so as to make correction easy. Heaven grant that my 'Internationals' be as lucky.

"I am still a cripple, and if irritability be a sign of recovery, my daughter says that my convalescence is approaching."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 1, 1871.

"I am so eager to save a post and see this in proof, that I have never left my desk for five hours, and only read it to Lord D. (Henry Bulwer), who was delighted with it, before I sent it.

"You have given me a rare fright by printing, as I see, what I said of Scott—at least, any other man than yourself doing so would terrify me, but you are a true friend and a wise critic, and what you have done must be right and safe: I do not remember one word of it. I have written myself back into gout, and must now go to bed. I had a sort of *coup* yesterday, and D. believed I was off."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 3, 1871.

"I have just seen 'Maga,' and I am ashamed at the prominence you have given my few words about Scott.

"What a close connection a man's ankles have with his intellect. I don't know, but I can swear

to it, that since I have become tender about the feet I have grown to feel very insecure about the thinking department, and the row in the cellar is re-echoed in the garret.

"Every fresh speech of Gladstone gives me a fresh seizure, and his last 'bunkum' at Aberdeen has cost me a pint of colchicum.

"I have an O'D. in my head on the 'Cobden Campaign,' but I suppose it is safer to leave it there. You know what the tenor replied when some one said from the pit, 'Monsieur, vous chantez faux.' 'Je le sais, Monsieur, mais je ne veux pas qu'on me le dise.'

"Give my warmest regards to Mrs Blackwood. I wish with all my heart, gout *nonobstant*, I was to dine with you to-day."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Oct.* 17, 1871.

"I know well but for golf and its 'divartin' sticks' I should have had a line from you, but you have no moment to spare correcting O'Ds. amidst your distractions.

"I kept back the proof I now send to hear from you and make any changes or alterations you might suggest, and I have a half-done O'Dowd 'On Widows' which I shall keep over for another time. I am sorely done up,—only able to crawl with a stick and a friendly arm, and so weak that the Irishwoman's simile of a 'sheet of wet paper' is my only parallel. Robert Lytton tells me he has got such a pleasant letter from you. He and

his wife had been stopping with us here, and we were delighted with them both."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Nov.* 1, 1871.

"I was sorry not to see my 'Home Rule' in 'Maga,' but sorrier still not to hear from you, and I tormented myself thinking—which I ought not—that you were somewhat *chagriné* with me. I am delighted now to find you are not, and that the only 'grievance' between us makes *me* the plaintiff for your not having printed my O'D. I can forgive this, however, and honestly assure you that I could forgive even worse at your hands. It is the nervous fear that I may be falling into [? senility] as well as gout that makes me tetchy about a rejected paper.

"Henry James got very safely out of my hands. He has no more pretension to play whist with me than I would have to cross-examine a witness before him, and I told him so before I won his sixpenny points.

"I fortunately asked F. O. by telegraph if I should take on the despatches, as the messenger was in quarantine, and they said not. They knew they were Henry Elliott's, and that the delay could not injure the freshness. He is a great diplomatist, and there is nothing ephemeral in the news he sends home. Drummond Wolff is here with me now and Lord Dalling, and our conversation is more remarkable for wit than propriety.

"While James was here I was too gouty to go

out with him, and what the latter Q.C. (queer customer) means by saying I was dog-bitten, I can't guess. I am now crippled hand and foot, and a perfect curse to myself from irritability."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Nov.* 3, 1871.

"If my late discomfiture in your opinion of my last rejected O'Ds. had not taught me that I am not infallible, I should say that the O'D. I now send you is, as regards thought or pith, as good as any of them. I wrote it in a fit of gout. Spasmodic it is, perhaps, but vigorous I hope.

"I have been violently assailed in letters for what I said about 'touching pitch,'—but there is nothing that leads me to retract or modify one word I wrote,—some from doctors, well written, but on a wrong issue. You can no more make people modest by Act of Parliament than you can make them grateful or polite in fifty other good things.

"A Mr Crane, West George Street, Glasgow, writes me a very courteous note, and says, 'I do thank the Editor of "Blackwood" for publishing what you say of Scott,' and goes on to express his hearty concurrence with it all, and he regrets that it had not been spoken instead of written, &c., &c.

"I do not feel as if I was to get better this time; but I have called wolf so often I shall scream no more. What I feel most, and struggle against most in vain, is depression. I have got to believe not only that my brains are leaving

me, but that my friends are tired of me. Of course, I couple the two disasters together, and long to be beyond the reach of remembering either one or the other.

"You read my MS. so easily that if you do not like the O'D. don't print it—it saves me a disappointment at least; and above all, do not mind any chance irritability I display in writing, for a cry escapes me in my pain, and I often do not hear it myself.

"Now that I write very little and brood a great deal, I sit thinking hours' long over a very good-for-nothing life, and owning to myself that no man ever did less with his weapon than I have. I say this in no vanity, but sheer shame and self-reproach.

"If I could be with you at times it would rouse and stimulate me greatly, for I think you know—that is, you understand—me better than almost any one, and I always feel the better of your company.

"Bulwer (Lord Dalling) is with me now; but he is a richer man than myself, and though we rally after dinner, we are poor creatures of a morning.

"Your last note did me real good, and I have re-read it three or four times."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"Trieste, *Nov.* 16, 1871.

"You are right about Bradlaugh, and I have added a few lines to insert in the place marked.

I hope I am not libellous, and I believe I have steered safely.

"I am breaking up at last more rapidly, for up to this the planking has been too tough; but I am now bumping heavily, and, please God, must soon go to pieces.

"Your kindness, and your wife's, are very dear to me. I am constantly thinking of you both. Your last note gave me sincere pleasure.

"Lytton and I talked a great deal of you and drank your health. We often wished you were with us. He is immensely improved — I mean mentally,—and become one of the very best talkers I ever met, and not a shade of any affectation about him. I am convinced he will make a great career yet.

"'Our Quacks' is, I think, a better title. Decide yourself."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Dec.* 11, 1871.

"I was indeed surprised at the address of your letter, but I should have been more than surprised —overjoyed—had I seen yourself, and I am sorely sorry you did not come on here. Do let it be for another time, and ask Mrs Blackwood to have a craving desire to see Venice and the Titians, and take me as an accident of the road.

"I am getting too ill for work, but not for the pleasure of seeing my friends, and there is nothing does me the same good.

"I see no difficulty in writing to you about

Austria, but not as O'Dowd,—gravely, soberly, and, if I could, instructingly. But I must wait for a little health and a little energy, or I should be only steaming with half-boiler power.

"I see little prospect now of getting better, and all I have to do is to scramble along with as much of health as remains to me, and not bore my friends or myself any more on the matter. Sending the divers down to report how thin my iron plating is, is certainly not the way to encourage me to a new voyage.

"Like a kind fellow, send me George Eliot's new book. There is nothing like her."

XXII.

TRIESTE.

1872.

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Jan.* 31, 1872.

"I AM ordered off to Fiume for change of air—the change of scene that is to affect me is somewhat farther. Before I go I send you two O'Ds. that have been under my hands these few weeks back. Whether they be print-worthy or not, you will know and decide; if so, I shall be back to correct and add another by the time a proof could reach me.

"I am in a very creaky condition, and why I hold together at all I don't understand. Like the *Megæra*, all the attempts to stop the leak only widens the breach."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Feb.* 15, 1872.

"It was an angel from heaven suggested to your wife the thought of a run out here. Only come and I'll go with you to Japan if you like.

There are no two people in the world I should rather see, and though the place is a poor one and I a dull dog, the thought of seeing you here would brighten us both up, as the mere notion has cheered me already."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *Feb.* 26, 1872.

"I send you (and thus early to be in time for next month) a short sketchy story which, as the man said of the Athanasian Creed, is founded on fact, but not the better (I mean the story) for that.

"It has a moral too, or rather several morals, to be distributed according to age and sex, and, in fact, is a 'righte merrie' and well conceived tale, as I hope you will tell me.

"I had fully made up my mind to write no more, and to water my grog to enable me to do so, but I now discover that neither of my two daughters like 'watered grog' at all, but prefer whatever dietary habit has inured them to. 'For this reason and for the season' I am at it once more, though my ink-bottle looks as ruefully at me as the Yankees at Gladstone for backing out of the N. Y. Convention.

"By the way, I hope you have printed my correct version of the Alabama; I know it is the true one, and as I am the only discoverer, I am jealous about my invention.

"I had a grand argument to arraign the Ministry on the Collier job (which no one hit on), but coming

at this d—d corner of Europe it was too late, and lost.

"I feel that the day after I am buried here some bright notion will occur to me and make me very uncomfortable in my grave. I have a dress rehearsal of this misery three times a-week, and gout all the time besides.

"Send me news of your plans and projects, if any of them tend this way. I shall have a 'thanks-giving day' of my own, and be grateful, without scarlet cloth or Mr Aytoun on the Board of Ws."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *March* 9 *and* 11.

"I begin your note now, not intending to finish till I see if the post, a couple of days hence, may bring me some news of my short story, 'Some one Pays.' Meanwhile I have time to thank you heartily for your note and its contents, and to say what courage you give me by the hope that Mrs Blackwood is really serious about coming out here. As a short tour nothing could be nicer than to come out by Brussels, Munich, and Vienna (and through Trieste), back by Venice, Milan, Florence, Turin, and the Mont Cenis to Paris. I am seriously anxious that you should have a number of interesting places to see, and that the journey should repay you thoroughly. Dull as the place is, every one needs some rest in a tour, and Trieste can come in as your halt, and all the pleasure your visit will give us will be your recompense for enduring our stupidity.

"Monson, who is here on his way to his post (Consul-General at Pesth), is just fresh from a visit to Lyons at Paris, where he met Lord Derby. It seems that Lord D. spoke very frankly and confidently of Gladstone's speedy fall, and of the Tories ascent to power, even to the extent of the distribution of office, who was to be Sec. at F. O., &c."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *March* 30, 1872.

"When I was thinking I was getting better I have fallen back again into short-breathing, heart-fluttering, and grampus-blowing bad as ever.

"I send you an absurd 'O'Dowd' to add to the 'Widows,' when you publish it. Rose comes here from Constantinople in a day or so, and by the time I shall receive the proof I shall probably have some secret details of Tichborne worth telling.

"If you and Mrs B. can come out here I think I shall persuade myself to live on till May at all events. I am resolved to meet you this spring, somewhere, anywhere. Whenever you can make your plans let me hear.

"I am rejoiced that you like my Albanian sketch story, and hope it will take.

"I wish you had time to look at 'Kilgobbin.' The talk is good enough—the story bad as can be."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *April* 9, 1872.

"A word to disabuse the world of the need of a 'Political Programme' which is well-timed just

now; and I send you a short O'D. to add to the others.

"I feel certain you will agree with my notion, and my only misgiving is, have I made myself clear enough?

"I have had a very sharp brush these last few days, and I am still wrestling with the enemy. I own I do not come up smiling after each round, but looking horribly grim. Let me only hear when there is a chance of seeing you and Mrs B. and your little girl, and I'll at once apply for a renewal of my lease of life, though it be only for a week or two."

To Mr John Blackwood.

"TRIESTE, *April* 11, 1872.

"It was only yesterday I sent off a short O'D. on the English demand for a 'Political Programme,' and I hope it has reached you, and more, that it is readable, for my hand and my head are degenerating *pari passu*.

"To-day I have got your welcome note, for which I thank you heartily. It will do me more good to see you than all my tinctures, and pray tell Mrs Blackwood she is quite right to bring her little girl with her. The journey, the new scenes and new faces, will be the healthiest excitement to a young mind, and, whether as correcting old ideas or storing up new ones, is a form of education not to be had of books or to be satisfied by governesses.

"You are really a good fellow to come and see

me in a cabin. I can only say if it were a palace you would be equally welcome, and more welcome you could not be.

"I'll not promise to go to England. I have scarcely wind for a 'three-mile heat,' but I'll take a short run with you somewhere, and we'll concert it when we meet. Rob. Lytton wrote to me a few days ago, and said how he hoped to see you. His wife has just had a boy, which I am heartily glad of, as they lately lost their only son. Mrs L. is the most charming, natural, and nice creature it is possible to imagine, and the crowning good fortune of Robert's life is to have met her.

"From Vienna here—you can do it in one day—fourteen and a half hours; but if you prefer to halve it, there is a nice halting-place, Gratz, Styria, where you arrive about three o'clock and leave the following day about the same: the Hôtel Elephant is excellent.

"Sydney and her man are at the Burlington, and well too—also their mother,—and can get you every detail of the journey *viâ* whichever route you take. I think you are right to come by Germany and go back by Italy, though it be against the precepts of climate, but that Germany after Italy is like following a strawberry ice with sauerkraut. I think 'Just like Rye' will be the best title for the 'O'Dowd,' and 'taking' as well as appropriate. Rose is still at Constantinople, I believe, trying to get the tobacco monopoly from the Government,—a huge affair of some millions sterling.

"The weather up to this was splendid here; now it has become 'more Irish and less nice,' and I fancy is one of the reasons of my maladies. One loves to lean on such subtleties, like the alderman who ascribed his health to his always having a strawberry in his wine-glass."

XXIII.

LOOKING BACKWARDS.

1871–1872.

[The autobiographical and bibliographical notes which Lever arranged to supply for a new edition of his novels were written during the latter part of 1871 and the spring of 1872. Unfortunately he did not live to complete the intended series of prefaces. They disclose highly interesting and amusing glimpses of his career and opinions, and they contain very open confessions of his loose literary methods, as well as some acute criticisms of his writings.]

'Harry Lorrequer.'

That some thirty years after the sketches which form this volume were written I should be called upon to revise and re-edit them is strange enough to me, well remembering, as I do, with what little hope of permanence they were penned, how lightly they were undertaken, and how carelessly thrown

together. But there is something still stranger in the retrospect, and that is, that these same papers—for originally they were contributed to 'The Dublin University Magazine'—should mainly have directed the course of my future life, and decided my entire career.

I may quote from a former preface that I was living in a very secluded spot when I formed the idea of jotting down these stories, many of them heard in boyhood, others constructed out of real incidents that occurred to my friends in travel, and some again—'The Adventures of Trevanion' and 'The French Duellist,' for instance—actual facts, well known to many who had formed part of the army of occupation in France.

To give what consistency I might to a mass of incongruous adventure, to such a variety of strange situations befalling one individual, I was obliged to imagine a character, which probably my experiences—and they were not very mature at the time—assured me as being perfectly possible: one of a strong will and a certain energy, rarely persistent in purpose and perpetually the sport of accident, with a hearty enjoyment of the pleasure of the hour, and a very reckless indifference as to the price to be paid for it. If I looked out on my acquaintances, I believed I saw many of the traits I was bent on depicting, and for others I am afraid I had only to take a peep into myself. If it is an error, then, to believe that in these Confessions I have ever recorded any incidents in my own life, there is no mistake in supposing that in

sketching Harry Lorrequer I was in a great measure depicting myself, and becoming, allegorically, an autobiographist.

Here is a confession which, if thirty odd years had not rolled over, I might be indisposed to make; but time has enabled me to look back on my work, and even on myself, with a certain degree of impartiality, and to feel, as regards both, as the great Paley said a man feels after he has finished his dinner, "That he might have done better."

It is perfectly unnecessary that I should say when and where I wrote these sketches; no thought of future authorship of any kind occurred to me, far less did I dream of abandoning my profession as a physician for the precarious livelihood of the pen. Indeed their success, such as it was, only became known to me after I had left Ireland and gone to live abroad, and it was there—at Brussels—my publishers wrote to me to request a continuance of my Confessions, with the assurance that they had found favour in the world and flattering notice from the press. Though I have been what the sarcastic French moralist called "blessed with a bad memory" all my life, I can still recall the delight—I cannot call it less—with which I heard my attempt at authorship had been successful. I did not awake, indeed, "to find myself famous," but I well remember the thrill of triumphant joy with which I read the letter that said "Go on," and the entrancing ecstasy I felt at the bare possibility of becoming known one day as a writer. I have had, since then, some moments

in which a partial success has made me very happy and very grateful, but I do not believe that all these put together, or indeed any possible favour the world might mete to me, would impart a tithe of the enjoyment I felt on hearing that 'Harry Lorrequer' had been liked by the public, and that they asked for more of him.

If this sort of thing amuses them, thought I, I can go on for ever; and believing this to be true, I launched forth with all that prodigal waste of material which, if it forms one of the reasons of success, is, strictly speaking, one among the many demerits of this story. That I neither husbanded my resources nor imagined that they could ever fail me were not my only mistakes; and I am tempted to show how little I understood of the responsibilities of authorship by repeating what I have told elsewhere,—an incident of the last number of 'Harry Lorrequer.' The MS. which contained the conclusion of the story had been sent through the Foreign Office bag from Brussels, and possibly had been mistaken for a despatch. At all events, like King Theodore's letter it had been thrown on one side and forgotten. In this strait my publishers wrote to me in a strain that "the trade" alone knows how to employ towards an unknown author.

Stung by the reproaches (and they were not mild) of my correspondent, I wrote back, enclosing another conclusion, and telling him to print either or both—as he pleased.

Years after, I saw the first MS. (which came to

hand at last) bound in my publisher's library and lettered, "Another ending to H. L."

When the great master of fiction condescended to inform the world on what small fragments of tradition or local anecdote the Waverley Novels were founded, he best exalted the marvellous skill of his own handiwork in showing how genius could develop the veriest incident of a life into a story of surpassing power and interest. I have no such secrets to reveal, nor have I the faintest pretension to suppose the public would care to hear about the sources from which I drew either my characters or my incidents. I have seen, however, such references to supposed portraiture of individuals in this story, that I am forced to declare there is but one character in the book of which the original had any existence, and to which I contributed nothing of exaggeration. This is Father Malachi Brennan. The pleasant priest was alive when I wrote the tale, and saw himself in print and—worse still—in picture, not, I believe, without a certain mock indignation, for he was too racy a humourist and too genuine a lover of fun to be really angry at this caricature of him.

The amusing author of 'The Wild Sports of the West'—Hamilton Maxwell—was my neighbour in the little watering-place where I was living,[1] and our intimacy was not the less close from the graver character of the society around us. We often exchanged our experiences of Irish character and life, and in our gossipings stories were told, added to,

[1] Portstewart.

and amplified in such a way between us that I believe neither of us could have pronounced at last who gave the initiative of an incident, or on which side lay the authorship of any particular event.

It would have been well had our intercourse stopped at these confidences, but, unfortunately, it did not. We often indulged in little practical jokes on our more well-conducted neighbours, and I remember that the old soldier from whom I drew some of the features I have given to Colonel Kamworth was especially the mark of these harmless pleasantries. Our Colonel was an excellent fellow, kind-hearted and hospitable, but so infatuated with a propensity to meddle with every one, and to be a partner in the joys, the afflictions, the failures, or the successes of all around him, that, with the best possible intentions and the most sincere desire to be useful to his neighbours, he became the cause of daily misconceptions and mistakes, sowed discord where he meant unity, and, in fact, originated more trouble and more distrust than the most malevolent mischief-maker of the whole country-side.

I am forced to own that the small persecutions with which my friend Maxwell and myself followed the worthy Colonel, the wrong intelligence with which we supplied him, particularly as regarded the rank and station of the various visitors who came down during the bathing season; the false scents on which we sent him, and the absurd enterprises on which we embarked him, even to

the extent of a mock address which induced him to stand for the "borough"—the address to the constituency being our joint production,—all these follies, I say, more or less disposed me, I am sure, to that incessant flow of absurd incident which runs through this volume, and which, after all, was little more than the reflex of our daily plottings and contrivings.

I believe my old friend the Colonel is still living: if he be, and he should read these lines, let him also read that I have other memories of him than those of mere jest and pleasantry—memories of his cordial hospitality and genial good nature,—and that there are few things I would like better than to meet and talk with him over bygones, knowing no one more likely to relish a pleasant reminiscence than himself, no one more certain to forgive a long-past liberty taken with him.

If there are many faults and blunders in this tale which I would willingly correct, if there be much I would curtail or cut out altogether, and if there be also occasionally incidents of which I could improve the telling, I am held back from any attempts of this kind by the thought that it was by these sketches, such as they are, I first won the hearing from the public which for more than thirty years has never deserted me, and that the favour which has given the chief pride and interest to my life dates from the day I was known as Harry Lorrequer.

The life of a physician has nothing so thoroughly

rewarding, nothing so cheering, so full of hearty encouragement, as in the occasional friendships to which it opens the way. The doctor attains to a degree of intimacy, and stands on a footing of confidence so totally exceptional, that if personal qualities lend aid to the position, his intercourse becomes friendship. Whether, therefore, my old career gave me any assistance in new roads, whether it imparted to me any habits of investigation as applicable to the full in morals as in matter, it certainly imparted to me the happy incident of standing on good terms with—I was going to say—my patient (and perhaps no better word could be found for him who has heard me so long, trusted me so much, given me so large a share in his favours, and come to look on me with such friendliness). It would be displaying the worst in me if I did not own that I owe to my books not only the most pleasant intimacies of my life, but some of my closest friendships. A chance expression, a fairly shadowed thought, a mere chord struck at random by a passing hand, as it were, has now and then placed me, as mesmerists call it, *en rapport* with some one who may have thought long and deeply on what I had but skimmed over; and straightway there was a bond between us.

No small satisfaction has it been to me occasionally to hear that out of the over-abundance of my own buoyancy and light-heartedness—and I had a great deal of both long ago—I have been able to share with my neighbour and given him part of my sunshine, and only felt the warmer myself. A

great writer—one of the most eloquent historians who ever illustrated the military achievements of his country—once told me that, as he lay sick and careworn after a fever, it was in my own reckless stories of soldier life that he found the cheeriest moments of his solitude: and now let me hasten to say that I tell this in no spirit of boastfulness, but with the heartfelt gratitude of one who has gained more by hearing that confession than Harry Lorrequer ever gained by all his own.

If to go over again the pages that I wrote so many years ago is in a measure to revisit in age the loved scenes of boyhood, and to ponder over passages the very spirit of whose dictation is dead and gone,—if all this has its sadness, I am cheered by remembering that I am still addressing many old and dear friends, and have also for my audience the sons and grandsons, and, what I like better, the daughters and granddaughters, of those who once listened to Harry Lorrequer.

'Charles O'Malley.'

The success of 'Harry Lorrequer' was the reason for writing 'Charles O'Malley.' That I myself was in nowise prepared for the favour the public bestowed on my first attempt is easily enough understood. The ease with which I strung my stories together—in reality the 'Confessions of Harry Lorrequer' are little more than a note-book of absurd and laughable incidents—led me to believe that I

could draw on this vein of composition without any limit whatever. I felt, or thought I felt, an inexhaustible store of fun and buoyancy within me, and I began to have a misty half-confused impression that Englishmen generally laboured under a sad-coloured temperament, and were proportionately grateful to any one who would rally them, even passingly, out of their despondency, and give them a laugh without much trouble for going in search of it.

When I set to work to write 'Charles O'Malley,' I was, as I have ever been, very low with fortune, and the success of a new venture was pretty much as eventful to me as the turn of the right colour at *rouge-et-noir*. At the same time, I had then an amount of spring in my temperament, and a power of enjoying life, which I can honestly say I never found surpassed. The world had for me all the interest of an admirable comedy, in which the part allotted to myself, if not a high or a foreground one, was eminently suited to my taste, and brought me, besides, sufficiently often on the stage to enable me to follow all the fortunes of the piece. Brussels (where I was then living) was adorned at the period with most agreeable English society. Some leaders of the fashionable world of London had come there to refit and recruit, both in body and estate. There were several pleasant people, and a great number of pretty people; and so far as I could judge, the fashionable dramas of Belgrave Square and its vicinity were being performed in the Rue Royale and the Boulevard de Waterloo with very considerable success. There were dinners, balls, *déjeûners*,

and picnics in the Bois de Cambre, excursions to Waterloo, and select little parties to Boisfort (a charming little resort in the forest), whose intense Cockneyism became perfectly inoffensive, being in a foreign land and remote from the invasion of home-bred vulgarity.

I mention these things to show the adjuncts by which I was aided, and the rattle of gaiety by which I was, as it were, "accompanied" when I tried my voice.

The soldier element tinctured our society strongly, and, I will add, most agreeably. Amongst those whom I remember best were several old Peninsulars. Lord Combermere was of this number; and another of our set was an officer who accompanied—if indeed he did not command—the first boat party who crossed the Douro. It is needless to say how diligently I cultivated a society so full of all the storied details I was eager to obtain, and how generously disposed were they to give me all the information I needed. On topography especially were they valuable to me, and with such good result that I have been more than once complimented on the accuracy of my descriptions of places which I have never seen.

When, therefore, my publishers asked me could I write a story in the Lorrequer vein,—a story in which active service and military adventure could figure more prominently than mere civilian life, and where achievements of a British army might form the staple of the narrative,—I was ready to reply: "*Not one, but fifty.*"

Do not mistake me, and suppose that any overweening confidence in my literary powers would have emboldened me to make this reply: my whole strength lay in the fact that I could not recognise anything like literary effort in the matter. If the world would only condescend to read that which I wrote precisely as I was in the habit of talking, nothing could be easier. Not alone was it easy, but it was intensely interesting and amusing to myself to be so engaged.

The success of 'Harry Lorrequer' had been freely wafted across the German Ocean: it was very intoxicating incense, and I set to work on my second book with a thrill of hope as regards the world's favour which—and it is no small thing to say it—I can yet recall.

I can recall, too,—and I am afraid more vividly still,—some of the difficulties of my task when I endeavoured to form anything like an accurate or precise idea of some campaigning incident, or some passage of arms, from the narratives of two distinct and separate "eye-witnesses." What mistrust I conceived for all eye-witnesses from my own brief experience of their testimonies! What an impulse did it lend to me to study the nature and the temperament of the narrator as an indication of the peculiar colouring he might lend his narrative! And how it taught me to measure the force of the French epigram that it was the alternating popularity of Marshal Soult that decided whether he won or lost the battle of Toulouse!

While, however, I was sifting these evidences, and separating, as well as I might, the wheat from the chaff, I was in a measure training myself for what, without my then knowing it, was to become my career in life. My training was not without a certain amount of labour, but so light and pleasant was the labour, so full of picturesque peeps at characters and of humorous views of human nature, that it would be the rankest ingratitude if I did not own that I gained all my earlier experiences of the world in very pleasant company, highly enjoyable at the time and with matter for charming souvenirs long afterwards.

That certain traits of my acquaintances found themselves embodied in some of the characters of this story,[1] I do not seek to deny. The principle of natural selection adapts itself to novels as well as to nature, and it would have demanded an effort above my strength to have disabused myself at the desk of all the impressions of the dinner-table, and to have forgotten features which interested or amused me.

One of the personages of my tale I drew, however, with very little aid from fancy. I would go so far as to say that I took him from the life, if my memory did not confront me with the lamentable inferiority of my picture to the great original which it was meant to portray.

With the exception of the quality of courage, I never met a man who contained within himself

[1] 'Charles O'Malley.'

so many of the traits of Falstaff as the individual who furnished me with "Major Monsoon." But the Major—I must call him so, though that rank was far beneath his own — was a man of unquestionable bravery. His powers as a story-teller were to my thinking unrivalled; the peculiar reflections on life which he would passingly introduce —the wise apothegms—were of a morality essentially of his own invention; he would indulge in the unsparing exhibition of himself in situations such as other men would never have confessed,— all blended up with a racy enjoyment of life, dashed occasionally with sorrow that our tenure of it was short of patriarchal. All these idiosyncracies, accompanied by a face redolent of intense humour and a voice whose modulations were managed with the skill of a consummate artist, were above me to convey; nor indeed, as I re-read any of the adventures in which he figures, am I other than ashamed at the weakness of my drawing and the poverty of my colouring.

In order to show that I had a better chance to personify him than is usually the lot of a novelist,—that I possessed, so to say, a vested interest in his life and adventures,—I will relate a little incident; and my accuracy, if necessary, can be attested by another actor in the scene who yet survives.

I was living a bachelor life at Brussels — my family being at Ostend for the bathing — during the summer of 1840. The city was comparatively empty, all the so-called society being absent at

the various spas or baths of Germany. One member of the British Legation, who remained at his post to represent the mission, and myself, making common cause of our desolation and ennui, spent much of our time together and dined *tête-à-tête* every day.

It chanced that one evening, as we were hastening through the park on our way to dinner, we espied the Major—as "Major" I must speak of him—lounging about with that half-careless, half-observant air which indicated a desire to be somebody's—anybody's—guest rather than to surrender himself to the homeliness of domestic fare.

"There's that confounded old Monsoon!" said my diplomatist friend. "It's all up if he sees us, and I can't endure him."

Now I must remark that my friend, though very far from being insensible to the humouristic side of the Major's character, was not always in the vein to enjoy it, and when he was so indisposed he could invest the object of his dislike with something little short of repulsiveness. "Promise me," said he, as Monsoon came towards us, "you'll not ask him to dinner." Before I could make any reply the Major was shaking a hand of either of us, rapturously expatiating over his good luck at meeting us. "Mrs M.," said he, "has got a dreary party of old ladies to dine with her, and I have come out here to find some pleasant fellow to join me and take our mutton-chop together."

"We're behind our time, Major," said my friend. "Sorry to leave you so abruptly, but must push

on. Eh, Lorrequer?" added he, to evoke corroboration from me.

"Harry says nothing of the kind," interrupted Monsoon. "He says, or he's going to say, 'Major, I have a nice bit of dinner waiting for me at home, — enough for two, will feed three; or, if there be a shortcoming, nothing easier than to eke out the deficiency by another bottle of Moulton. Come along with us then, Monsoon, and we shall be all the merrier for your company.'"

Repeating his words, "Come along, Monsoon," I passed my arm within his, and away we went. For a moment my friend tried to get free and leave me, but I held him fast and carried him along in spite of himself. He was, however, so chagrined and provoked that till the moment we reached my door he never uttered a word nor paid the slightest attention to Monsoon, who talked away in a vein that occasionally made gravity all but impossible.

Dinner proceeded drearily enough: the diplomatist's stiffness never relaxed for a moment, and my own awkwardness damped all my attempts at conversation. Not so, however, Monsoon; he ate heartily, approved of everything, and pronounced my wine to be exquisite. He gave us a discourse upon sherry and the Spanish wines in general; told us the secret of the Amontillado flavour; and explained the process of browning, by boiling down wine, which some are so fond of in England. At last he diverged into anecdote. "I was once fortunate enough," said he, "to fall upon some of

that choice sherry from the St Lucas Luentas which is always reserved for royalty. It was a pale wine, delicious in the drinking, and leaving no more flavour in the mouth than a faint dryness that seemed to say, 'Another glass.' Shall I tell you how I came by it?" And scarcely pausing for a reply, he told the story of having robbed his own convoy and stolen the wine he was in charge of for safe conveyance.[1]

I wish I could give any, even the weakest, idea of how he narrated the incident,—the struggle between duty and temptation, and the apologetic tone of voice in which he explained that the frame of mind which succeeds to any yielding to seductive influences is often in the main more profitable to a man than is the vainglorious sense of having resisted a temptation. "Meekness is the mother of all virtues," said he, "and there is no meekness without frailty." The story, told as he told it, was too much for the diplomatist's gravity, and at last he fairly roared with laughter.

As soon as I myself recovered from the effects of his drollery I said, "Major, I have a proposition to make. Let me tell that story in print and I'll give you five Naps."

"Are you serious, Harry?" said he. "Is this on honour?"

"On honour assuredly," I replied.

"Let me have the money down on the nail and I'll give you leave to have me and my whole life,—every adventure that ever befell me,—ay, and if

[1] The story of the stolen sherry is told in 'Charles O'Malley.'

you like, every moral reflection that my experiences have suggested."

"Done!" cried I. "I agree."

"Not so fast," said the diplomatist. "We must make a protocol of this: the high contracting parties must know what they give and what they receive. I'll draw out the treaty."

He did so, at full length, on a sheet of that solemn blue-tinted paper dedicated to despatch purposes, duly setting forth the concession and the consideration. Each of us signed the document; it was witnessed and sealed; and Monsoon pocketed my five Napoleons, filling a bumper to any success the bargain might bring me.

This document, along with my university degree, my commission in a militia regiment, and a vast amount of letters (very interesting to me), were seized by the Austrian authorities on the way from Como to Florence in the August of 1847, being deemed part of a treasonable correspondence—purposely allegorical in form,—and they were never restored to me. I freely own that I'd give all the rest willingly to repossess myself of the Monsoon treaty.

To show that I did not entirely fail in making my "Major" resemble the great original from whom I copied, I may mention that he was speedily recognised by the Marquis of Londonderry, the well-known Sir Charles Stuart of the Peninsular campaign. "I know that fellow well," said he. "He once sent me a challenge, and I had to make him a very humble apology. The

occasion was this: I had been out with a single aide-de-camp to make a reconnaissance in front of Victor's division; and to avoid attracting any notice, we covered over our uniform with two common grey overcoats which reached to the feet, effectually concealing our rank. Scarcely, however, had we topped a hill which commanded a view of the French, when a shower of shells flew over and around us. Amazed to think that we had been so quickly noticed, I looked around me and discovered, quite close in my rear, your friend Monsoon with what he called his staff,—a popinjay set of rascals dressed out in green and gold, and with more plumes and feathers than ever the general staff boasted. Carried away by momentary passion at the failure of my reconnaissance, I burst out with some insolent allusion to the harlequin assembly which had drawn the French fire upon us. Monsoon saluted me respectfully and retired without a word; but I had scarcely reached my quarters when a 'friend' of his waited upon me with a message,—a categorical message it was, too: 'It must be a meeting or an ample apology.' I made the apology—a most full one—for the 'Major' was right and I had not a fraction of reason to sustain me. We have been the best of friends ever since."

I had heard the story before this from Monsoon, but I did not then accord it all the faith that was its due; and I admit that the accidental corroboration of this one event very often served to puzzle me afterwards, when I listened to tales in which

the Major seemed to be a second Munchausen. It might be that he was amongst the truest and most matter-of-fact of historians. May the reader be not less embarrassed than myself! is my sincere, if not very courteous, prayer. I have no doubt that often in recounting some strange incident—a personal experience it always was—he was himself carried away by the credulity of his hearers and the amount of interest he could excite in them, rather than by the story. He possessed the true narrative style, and there was a marvellous instinct in the way in which he would vary a tale to suit the tastes of an audience, while his moralisings were almost certain to take the tone of a humouristic quiz of the company. Though fully aware that I was availing myself of the contract that delivered him into my hands, and though he dined with me two or three times a-week, he never lapsed into any allusion to his appearance in print, and 'O'Malley' had been published some weeks when he asked me to lend him "that last thing" —he forgot the name of it—I was writing.[1]

[1] "'Major Monsoon' was Commissary-General Mayne. . . . When he entered a town," Lever declared, "he hastened to the nearest church and appropriated whatever plate or costly reliquaries he could seize. He once had a narrow escape from hanging, after having actually undergone a drum-head court-martial. When the allied armies entered Paris, Wellington was of course the constant figure of attraction. At a grand *fête* he took wine (or went through the form of it) with any officer whose face was remembered by him. The Commissary-General was a guest at this entertainment, and Wellington's eye rested on him. Up went the hand and glass as a signal, and bows were wellnigh exchanged, when the Duke thundered out, 'Oh! I thought I had hanged you at Badajoz. Never mind, I'll do it next time. I drink your health.'"—Fitzpatrick's 'Life of Lever.'

Of Frank Webber I have said elsewhere that he was one of my earliest friends, my chum at college, and in the very chambers in Old Trinity where I have located Charles O'Malley. He was a man of the highest order of abilities, with a memory that never forgot; but he was ruined and run to seed by the idleness that came of a discursive uncertain temperament. Capable of anything—he spent his youth in follies and eccentricities, every one of which, however, gave indications of a mind inexhaustible in resources and abounding in devices and contrivances. Poor fellow! he died young; and perhaps it is better it should have been so. Had he lived to a later day, he would most probably have been found a foremost leader of Fenianism; and from what I knew of him, I can say that he would have been a more dangerous enemy to English rule than any of those dealers in the petty larceny of rebellion we have lately seen amongst us.

Of Mickey Free I had not one, but one thousand, types. Indeed I am not quite sure that in my late visit to Dublin[1] I did not chance on a living specimen of the "Free" family, much readier in repartee, quicker at an *apropos*, and droller in illustration, than my own Mickey. The fellow was "boots" at a great hotel in Sackville Street; and he afforded me more amusement and some heartier laughs than it has always been my fortune to enjoy in a party of wits. His criticisms on my sketches of Irish character were about the shrewdest and

[1] He refers here to his last visit in 1871.—E. D.

the best I ever listened to; and that I am not bribed to this opinion by any flattery, I may remark that they were often more severe than complimentary, and that he hit every blunder of image, every mistake in figure, of my peasant characters with an acuteness and correctness which made me very grateful to know that his daily occupations were limited to the blacking of boots and not to the "polishing off" of authors.

I should like to own that 'Charles O'Malley' was the means of according me a more heartfelt glow of satisfaction, a more gratifying sense of pride, than anything I ever have written. My brother, at that time the rector of an Irish parish, once forwarded to me a letter from a lady, unknown to him, who had heard that he was the brother of "Harry Lorrequer," and who addressed him not knowing where a letter might be directed to myself. The letter was the grateful expression of a mother, who said: "I am the widow of a field-officer, and with an only son, for whom I obtained a presentation to Woolwich; but seeing in my boy's nature certain traits of nervousness and timidity which induced me to hesitate on embarking him in the career of a soldier, I became very unhappy, and uncertain which course to decide upon. While in this state of uncertainty I chanced to make him a birthday present of 'Charles O'Malley,' the reading of which seemed to act like a charm on his whole character, inspiring him with a passion for movement and adventure, and spiriting him on to an eager desire for a military life. Seeing that this

was no passing enthusiasm but a decided and determined bent, I accepted the cadetship for him, and his career has been not alone distinguished as a student, but one which has marked him out for an almost hare-brained courage and for a dash and heroism that give high promise for his future. Thank your brother for me," she continued,—"a mother's thanks for the welfare of an only son, and say how I wish that my best wishes for him and his could recompense him for what I owe him."

I humbly hope that it may not be imputed to me as unpardonable vanity the recording of this incident. It gave me intense pleasure when I heard it; and now, as I look back on it, it invests the story for myself with an interest which nothing else that I have written can afford me.

'Jack Hinton.'

The favour with which the public received 'Charles O'Malley,' and the pleasant notices forwarded to me by my publisher, gave me great courage; and when asked if I could be ready by a certain date with a new story, I never hesitated to say Yes. My first thought was that in the campaign of the Great Napoleon I might find what would serve as a "pendant" to the story I had just completed, and that by making — as there would be no impropriety in doing—an Irishman a soldier of France, I could still have on my side

certain sympathies of my reader which would not so readily attach to a foreigner. I surrounded myself at once with all the histories and memoirs I could find of the Consulate and the Empire; and, so far as I could, withdrew my mind from questions of home interest, and lived entirely amidst the mighty events that began at Marengo and ended at Waterloo.

Whether I failed to devise such a narrative as I needed, or whether — and I suspect this must have been the real reason—I found that the vastness of the theme overpowered me, I cannot at this distance of time remember. But so it was, that I found much time had slipped over, and that beyond some few notes and some scattered references, I had actually done nothing; and my publisher had applied to me for the title of my story for advertisement before I had begun or written a line of it.

Some disparaging remarks on Ireland and Irishmen in the London press, not very unfrequent at the time, nor altogether obsolete now, had provoked me at the moment; and the sudden thought occurred of a reprisal by showing the many instances in which the Englishman would almost of necessity mistake and misjudge my countrymen, and that out of these blunders and misapprehensions, situations might arise that, if welded into a story, might be made to be amusing. I knew that there was not a class nor a condition in Ireland which had not marked differences from the correlative rank in England; and that not only the Irish squire,

the Irish priest, and the Irish peasant were unlike anything in the larger island, but that the Dublin professional man, the official, and the shopkeeper, had traits and distinctions essentially their own. I had frequently heard opinions pronounced on Irish habits which I had easily traced to that quizzing habit of my countrymen, who never can deny themselves the enjoyment of playing on the credulity of the traveller,—all the more eagerly when they see his note-book taken out to record their shortcomings and absurdities.

These thoughts suggested 'Jack Hinton,' and led me to turn from my intention to follow the French arms, or rather to postpone the plan, for it had got too strong a hold on me to be utterly abandoned.

I have already acknowledged that I strayed from the path I had determined on, and, with very little reference to my original intention, suffered my hero to take his chance among the natives. Indeed I soon found him too intensely engaged in the cares of self-preservation to have much time or taste for criticism on his neighbours.

I have owned elsewhere that for Mr Paul Rooney, Father Tom Loftus, Bob Mahon, O'Grady, Tipperary Joe, and even Corny Delaney, I had not to draw on imagination, but I never yet heard one correct guess as to the originals.

While on this theme, I may recall an incident which occurred about three years after the story was published, and which, if only for the trait of good-humour it displayed, is worth remembering. I was making a little rambling tour through

Ireland with my wife, following for the most part the sea-board, and only taking such short cuts inland as should bring us to some spot of especial interest. We journeyed with our own horses, and consequently rarely exceeded five-and-twenty or thirty miles in a day. While I was thus refreshing many an old memory, and occasionally acquiring some new experience, the ramble interested me much. It was in the course of this almost capricious journey—for we really had nothing like a plan—we reached the little town of Gort, where, to rest our horses, we were obliged to remain a day. There was not much to engage attention in the place. It was perhaps less marked by poverty than most Irish towns of its class, and somewhat cleaner and more orderly; but the same distinctive signs were there of depression, the same look of inertness that one remarks almost universally through the land.

In strolling half listlessly about on the outskirts of the town, we were overtaken by a heavy thunder-storm, and were driven to take shelter in a little shop where a number of other people had also sought refuge. As we stood there, an active-looking but elderly man in the neat black of an ecclesiastic, and with a rosette in his hat, politely addressed us, and proposed that, instead of standing there in the crowd, we would accept the hospitality of his lodging, which was in the same house, till such time as the storm should have passed over. His manner, his voice, and his general appearance convinced me he was a

dignitary of our Church. I thanked him at once for his courtesy, and accepted his offer. He proceeded to show us the way, and we entered a very comfortably-furnished sitting-room, where a pleasant fire was burning, and sat down well pleased with our good fortune.

While we chatted freely over the weather and the crops, some chance expression escaped me to show that I had regarded him as a clergyman of the Established Church. He at once, but with peculiar delicacy, hastened to correct my mistake, and introduce himself as the Roman Catholic Dean O'Shaughnessy. "I am aware whom I am speaking to," added he, pronouncing my name. Before I could express my surprise at being recognised where I had not one acquaintance, he explained that he had read—in some local paper which described our mode of travelling—of my being in the neighbourhood, and this led him at once to guess our identity.

After a few flattering remarks on the pleasure something of mine had afforded him, he said, "You are very hard upon *us*, Mr Lever. You never let *us* off easily, but I assure you for all that we bear you no ill-will. There is a strong national tie between us, and we can stand a good deal of quizzing for the sake of that bond."

I knew he was alluding to his order; and when I said something—I cannot remember what—about the freedoms that fiction led to, he stopped, saying, "Well, well! the priests are not angry with you after all, if it wasn't for one thing."

"Oh, I know," cried I, "that stupid story of Father D'Array and the Pope."[1]

"No, no, not that; we laughed at that as much as any Protestant of you all. What we could not bear so well was an ugly remark you made in 'Harry Lorrequer,' where—when there was a row at a wake and the money was scattered over the floor—you say that the priest gathered more than his share because—and here was the bitterness—old habit had accustomed him to scrape up his corn in low places! Now, Mr Lever, that was not fair; it was not generous, surely!"

The good temper and the gentleman-like quietness of the charge made me very uncomfortable at the time; and now, after many years, I recall the incident to show the impression it made on me—the only atonement I can make for the flippancy.

I had begun this story of 'Jack Hinton' at Brussels, but on a proposition made to me by the publisher and proprietor of 'The Dublin University Magazine' to take the editorship of that periodical, I determined to return to Ireland.

To do this, I was not alone to change my abode and my country, but to alter the whole destiny of my life. I was at the time a practising physician attached to the British Legation, with the best practice of any Englishman in the place, a most pleasant society, and, what I valued not less than them all, the intimacy of the most agreeable and companionable man[2] I ever knew in my life, whose

[1] A story told in 'Harry Lorrequer.'

[2] Sir George Hamilton Seymour.

friendship I have never ceased to treasure with pride and affection. I dedicated to him my first book, and it is with deep gratitude and pleasure I recall him while I give the last touches to these volumes.

There is one character in this story to which imagination contributed scarcely anything in the portraiture, though I do not pretend to say that the situations in which I have placed him are derived from facts. Tipperary Joe was a real personage; and if there are, among my readers, any who remember the old coaching days between Dublin and Kilkenny, they cannot fail to recall the curious figure, clad in a scarlet hunting-coat and black velvet cap, who used, at the stage between Carlow and the Royal Oak, to emerge from some field beside the road, and, after a trot of a mile or so beside the horses, crawl up at the back of the coach and over the roof, collecting what he called his rent from the passengers,—a very humble tribute generally, but the occasion of a good deal of jest and merriment, not diminished if by any accident an English traveller were present, who could neither comprehend the relations between Joe and the gentlemen, nor the marvellous freedom with which this poor ragged fellow discussed the passengers and their opinions.

Joe—I must call him so, for his real name has escaped me—once came to see me in Trinity College, and was curious to visit the Chapel, the Library, and the Examination Hall. I will not pretend that I undertook my office of cicerone

without some misgivings, for though I was prepared to endure all the quizzings of my friends and acquaintances, I was not quite at my ease as to how the authorities—the dons, as they are called elsewhere—would regard this singular apparition within academic precincts. Joe's respectful manner, and an air of interest that bespoke how much the place engaged his curiosity, soon set me at my ease; while the ready tact with which he recognised and uncovered to such persons as held rank or station at once satisfied me that I was incurring no risk whatever in my office as guide.

The kitchen and the sight of those gigantic spits, on which a whole series of legs of mutton were turning slowly, overcame all the studied reserve of his manner, and he burst into a most enthusiastic encomium on the merits of an institution so admirably suited to satisfy human requirements.

When he learned, from what source I do not know, that I had put him in a book, he made it—not unreasonably, perhaps—the ground of a demand on my purse; and if the talented artist who had illustrated the tale had been accessible to him, I suspect that he, too, would have had to submit to the levy of a blackmail, all the more heavily as Joe was by no means pleased with a portrait which really only self-flattery could have objected to.

Hablot K. Browne never saw him, and yet in his sketch of him standing to say his "good-bye" to Jack Hinton at Kingston, he has caught the character of his figure and the moping lounge of his attitude to perfection. Indeed, though there

is no resemblance in the face to Joe, the pose of the head and the position of the limbs recall him at once.

I have already said elsewhere that the volume amused me while I was writing it. Indeed I had not at the time exhausted, if I had even tapped, the cask of a buoyancy of temperament which carried me along through my daily life in the sort of spirit one rides a fresh horse over a swelling sward. If this confession will serve to apologise for the want of studied coherency in the narrative, and the reckless speed in which events succeed events throughout, I shall deem myself indebted to the generous indulgence of my readers.

'The O'Donoghue.'

It was in wandering through the south of Ireland I came to visit the wild valley of Glenflesk—a scene of loneliness and desolation with picturesque beauty I have never seen surpassed. The only living creature I met for miles of the way was a very old man, whose dress and look bespoke extreme poverty, but who, on talking with him, I discovered to be the owner of four cows that were grazing on the rocky sides of the cliff. He had come some miles, he told me, to give his cows the spare herbage that cropped up amongst the granite boulders. As I had seen no house or trace of habitation as I came along, I was curious to know where he lived, but his answer, as he pointed

to the mountain, was, "There, alone," and this with evident unwillingness to be more freely communicative.

Though not caring to be interrogated, nor, like most Irish peasants, much inclined to have a talk with a stranger, he made no scruple to ask for alms, and pleaded his wretched rags—and they were very miserable—as a proof of his poverty. I did not think that the pittance I gave him exactly warranted me in asking how the owner of the cows we saw near us could be in that condition of want he represented; at all events I preferred not to dash the pleasure I was giving him by the question. We parted, therefore, on good terms, but some miles farther on in the glen I learned from a woman, who was "bulling" her clothes in the river, that "ould Mat," as she called him, was one of the most well-to-do farmers in that part of the country; that he had given his daughters, of whom he had several, good marriage portions, and that his son was a thriving attorney in the town of Tralee. "Maybe yer honor's heard of him," said the woman,—"Tim O'Donoghue."

It was no new thing to me to know the Irish peasant in his character as a hoarder and a saver. There is no one trait so indicative of the Celt as acquisitiveness, nor does Eastern story contain a man more given to the castle-building that grows out of some secret hoard—however small—than Paddy. He is to add half an acre to his potato-garden, or to buy another pig, or to send the "gossoon" to a school in the town, or to pay his

passage to New York. This tendency to construct a future, so strong in the Irish nature, has its rise in a great reliance on what he feels to be the goodness of God: a firm conviction that all his struggles are watched and cared for, and that every little turn of good fortune has been given him by some especial favour, lies deep in his nature, and suggests an amount of hope to him which a less sanguine spirit could never have conceived.

While I thought over the endless contrarieties of this mysterious national character, where good and evil eternally lay side by side, I wondered within myself whether the new civilisation of latter years was likely to be successful in dealing with men whose temperaments and manners were so unlike the English, or were we right in extinguishing the old feudalism that bound the peasant to the landlord, ere we had prepared each for the new relations of mere gain and loss that were in future to subsist between them?

Between the great families—the old houses of the land and the present race of proprietors—there lay a couple of generations of men who, with all the traditions and many of the pretensions of birth and fortune, had really become in ideas, modes of life, and habits, very little above the peasantry about them. They inhabited, it is true, the "great house," and they were in name the owners of the soil, but, crippled by debt and overborne by mortgages, they subsisted in a shifty conflict with their creditors, rack-renting their miserable tenants to maintain it. Survivors of everything but pride of family, they

stood there like stumps, blackened and charred, the last remnants of a burnt forest, their proportions attesting the noble growth that preceded them.

What would the descendants of these men prove when, destitute of fortune and helpless, they were thrown upon a world that actually regarded them as blamable for the unhappy condition of Ireland? Would they stand by "their order" in so far as to adhere to the cause of the gentry? Or would they share the feelings of the peasant to whose lot they had been reduced, and charging on the Saxons the reverses of their fortune, stand forth as rebels to England?

Here was much food for speculation and something for a story. For an opening scene what could I desire finer than the gloomy grandeur and the rugged desolation of Glenflesk! And if some patches of bright verdure here and there gleamed amidst the barrenness,—if a stray sunbeam lit up the granite cliffs and made the heather glow,—might there not be certain reliefs of human tenderness and love to show that no scene in which man has a part is utterly destitute of those affections whose home is the heart? I had now got my theme and my locality. For my name I took 'The O'Donoghue'; it had become associated in my mind with Glenflesk, and would not be separated from it.

Here, then, in one word, is the history of this book. If the performance bears but slight relation to the intention,—if, indeed, my story seems to have little reference to what suggested it,—it will only

be another instance of a waywardness which has beset me through life, and left me never sure when I started for Norway that I might not find myself in Naples.

It is not necessary, perhaps, for me to say that no character in this tale was drawn from a model. I began the story, in so far as a few pages went, at a little inn at Killarney, and I believe I stole the name of Kerry O'Leary from one of the boatmen on the lake; but, so far as I am aware, it is the only theft in the book. I believe that the very crude notions of an English tourist for the betterment of Ireland, and some exceedingly absurd comments he made me on the habits of people which an acquaintanceship of three weeks enabled him to pronounce on, provoked me to draw the character of Sir Marmaduke; but I can declare that the traveller aforesaid only acted as tinder to a mine long prepared, and afforded me a long-sought-for opportunity—not for exposing, for I did not go that far, but—for touching on the consummate effrontery with which a mere passing stranger can settle the difficulties and determine the remedies for a country in which the resident sits down overwhelmed by the amount, and utterly despairing of a solution.

I have elsewhere recorded that I have been blamed for the fate I reserved for Kate O'Donoghue, and that she deserved something better than to have her future linked to one who was so unworthy of her in many ways. Till I re-read the story after a long lapse of years, I had believed

that this charge was better founded than I am now disposed to think it. First of all, judging from an Irish point of view, I do not consent to regard Mark O'Donoghue as a bad fellow. The greater number of his faults were the results of neglected training, irregular—almost utter want of—education, and the false position of an heir to a property so swamped by debt as to be valueless. I will not say these are the ingredients which go to the formation of a very regular life or a very perfect husband, but they might all of them have made a worse character than Mark's if he had not possessed some very sterling qualities as a counterbalance. Secondly, I am not of those who think that the married life of a man is but the second volume of his bachelor existence. I rather incline to believe that he starts afresh in life under circumstances very favourable to the development of whatever is best, and to the extinguishment of what is worst in him. That is, of course, where he marries well, and where he allies himself to qualities of temper and tastes which will serve as the complement, or, at times, the correctives, of his own. Now Kate O'Donoghue would instance what I mean in this case.

Then I keep my best reason for the last: they liked each other. This, if not a guarantee for their future happiness, is still the best "martingale" the game of marriage admits of.

I am free to own that the book I had in my head to write was a far better one than I have committed to paper, but as this is a sort of event

which has happened to better men than myself, I bear it as one of the accidents that authorship is heir to.

A French critic—one far too great to have his dicta despised—has sneered at my making a poor ignorant peasant child find pleasure in the resonance of a Homeric verse; but I could tell him of bare-footed boys in the South, running errands for a scanty subsistence, with a knowledge of classical literature which would puzzle many a grown student to cope with.

'The Knight of Gwynne.'

I wrote this story in the Tyrol.[1] The accident of my residence there was in this wise: I had travelled about the Continent for a considerable time, in company with my family, and with my own horses. Our carriage was a large and comfortable *calèche*, and our team four horses, the leaders of which, well-bred and thriving-looking, served as saddle-horses when needed.

There was something very gipsy-like in this roving uncertain existence (that had no positive bent or limit, and left every choice of place an open question) which gave me intense enjoyment. It opened to me views of Continental life, scenery, people, and habits which I should certainly never have attained by other modes of travel.

[1] As a matter of fact—though the fact in itself is of little importance,—Lever composed about one-half of 'The Knight' at Carlsruhe. The novel began to appear in monthly parts early in the year 1846.—E. D.

Not only were our journeys necessarily short each day, but we frequently sojourned in little villages and out-of-the-way spots where, if pleased by the place itself and the accommodation afforded, we would linger on for days, the total liberty of our time at our disposal, and all our nearest belongings around us.

In the course of these rambles we had arrived at the town of Bregenz, on the Lake of Constance, where the inn-keeper, to whom I was known, accosted me with all the easy freedom of his calling, and half-jestingly alluded to my mode of travelling as a most unsatisfactory and wasteful way of life, which could never turn out profitably to me or mine. From the window where we were standing as we talked I could descry the tall summit of an ancient castle or *schloss*, about two miles away; and, rather to divert my antagonist from his argument than with any more serious purpose, I laughingly told my host, if he could secure me such a fine old chateau as that I then looked at, I should stable my nags and rest where I was. On the following day, thinking of nothing less than my late conversation, the host entered my room to assure me that he had been over to the castle, had seen the baron, and learned that he would have no objection to lease me his chateau, provided I took it for a fixed term, and with all its accessories, not only of furniture but cows and farm-requisites. One of my horses, accidentally pricked in shoeing, had obliged me at the moment to delay a day or two at the inn, and for want of

better to do, though without the most remote intention of becoming a tenant of the castle, I yielded so far to my host's solicitation as to walk over and see it.

If the building itself was far from faultless it was spacious and convenient, and its position on a low hill in the middle of a lawn finer than anything I can convey, the four sides of the *schloss* commanding four distinct and perfectly dissimilar views. By the north it looked over a wooded plain, on which stood the Convent of Mehreran, and beyond this, the broad expanse of the Lake of Constance. The south opened on a view towards the Upper Rhine and the valley that led to the Via Mala. On the east you saw the Gebhardsberg and its chapel, and the lovely orchards that bordered Bregenz; while to the west rose the magnificent Lenten and the range of the Swiss Alps—their summits lost in the clouds.

I was so enchanted by the glorious panorama around me, and so carried away by the thought of a life of quiet labour and rest in such a spot, that, after hearing a very specious account of the varied economies I should secure by this choice of a residence, and the resources I should have in excursions on all sides, I actually contracted to take the chateau, and became the master of the Rieder Schloss from that day.[1]

[1] Dr Fitzpatrick, in his 'Life of Lever,' furnishes a more prosaic account of the annexing of the Tyrolean castle,—Mr Stephen Pearce being given as the authority for the unromantic statement that the *schloss* was advertised "to let," and that while the Levers were sojourning in Carlsruhe negotiations were opened with Baron Pöllnitz,

Having thus explained by what chance I came to pitch my home in this little-visited spot, I have no mind to dwell further on these Tyrol experiences than so far as they concern the story I wrote there.

If the scene in which I was living, the dress of the peasants, the daily wants and interests, had been my prompters, I could not have addressed myself to an Irish theme; but long before I had come to settle at Riedenburg, when wandering among the Rhine villages, on the vine-clad slopes of the Bergstrasse, I had been turning over in my mind the Union period of Ireland as the era for a story. It was a time essentially rich in the men we are proud of as a people, and peculiarly abounding in traits of self-denial and devotion which, in the corruption of a few, have been totally lost sight of, the very patriotism of the time having been stigmatised as factious opposition or unreasoning resistance to wiser counsels. That nearly every man of ability in the land was against the Minister; that not only all the intellect of Ireland but all the high spirit of its squirearchy and the generous impulses of the people were opposed to the Union, —there is no denying. If eloquent appeal and powerful argument could have saved a nation, Henry Grattan or Plunkett would not have spoken

and Mr Pearce was despatched to Bregenz, where he entered into an agreement for a short lease of "the premises." This, of course, spoils the story which Charles Lever tells; but I have in my possession a letter written by Mr Pearce at Riedenburg on May 26, 1846, quoted at p. 210 of vol. i., which would seem to bear out the tale told by the author of 'The Knight of Gwynne' in 1872.—E. D.

in vain; but the measure was decreed before it was debated, and the annexation of Ireland was made a Cabinet decision before it came to Irishmen to discuss it.

I had no presumption to imagine I could throw any new light on the history of the period, or illustrate the story of the measure by any novel details; but I thought it would not be uninteresting to sketch the era itself; what aspect society presented; how the country gentleman of the time bore himself in the midst of solicitations and temptings the most urgent and insidious, —what, in fact, was the character of that man whom no national misfortunes could subdue, no ministerial blandishments corrupt; of him, in short, that an authority with little bias to the land of his birth has called — *The First Gentleman in Europe.*

I know well, I feel too acutely, how inadequately I have pictured what I desired to paint; but even, after the interval of years, I look back on my poor attempt with the satisfaction of one whose aim was not ignoble. A long and deep experience of life permits me to say that in no land nor amongst any people have I ever found the type of what we love to emblematise by the word gentleman so distinctly marked out as in the educated and travelled Irishman of that period. The same unswerving fidelity of friendship, the same courageous devotion to a cause, the same haughty contempt for all that was mean or unworthy: these, with the lighter accessories of a genial

temperament, joyous disposition, and a chivalrous respect for women, made up what, at least, I had in my mind when I tried to present to my reader my Knight of Gwynne.

That my character of him was not altogether ideal, I can give no better proof than the fact that during the course of publication I received several letters from persons unknown to me, asking whether I had not drawn my portrait from this or that original,—many concurring in the belief that I had taken as my model The Knight of Kerry, whose qualities, I am well assured, fully warranted the suspicion.

For my attempt to depict the social habits of the period I had but to draw on my memory. In my boyish days I had heard much of the period, and was familiar with most of the names of its distinguished men. Anecdotes of Henry Grattan, Flood, Parsons, Ponsonby, and Curran jostled in my mind with stories of their immediate successors, the Burkes and the Plunketts, whose fame has come down to the very day we live in. As a boy it was my fortune to listen to the narratives of the men who had been actors in the events of that exciting era, and who could even show me in modern Dublin the scenes where memorable events occurred, and not infrequently the very houses where celebrated convivialities had taken place. Thus, from Drogheda Street, the modern Sackville Street, where the beaux of the day lounged in all their bravery, to the Circular Road, where a long file of carriages, six-in-hand, evidenced the luxury and tone of display of

the capital, I was deeply imbued with the features of the time, and I ransacked the old newspapers and magazines with a zest which only great familiarity with the names of the leading characters could have inspired.

Though I have many regrets on the same score, there is no period of my life in which I have the same sorrow for not having kept some sort of note-book, instead of trusting to a memory most fatally unretentive and uncertain. Through this omission I have lost traces of innumerable epigrams and *jeux-d'esprit;* and even where my memory has occasionally relieved the effort, I have forgotten the author.

To give an instance: the witty lines—

> "With a name that is borrowed, a title that's bought,
> Sir William would fain be a gentleman thought:
> His wit is but cunning, his courage but vapour,
> His pride is but money, his money but paper."

These lines, wrongfully attributed to a political leader in the Irish House, were in reality written by Lovell Edgeworth on the well-known Sir William Gladdowes, who became Lord Newcomen; and the verse was not only poetry but prophecy, for on his bankruptcy, some years afterwards, the sarcasm became fact—his money *was* but paper.

The circumstance of the authorship of the lines was communicated to me by Miss Edgeworth, whose letter was my first step in acquaintance with her, and gave me a pleasure and a pride which long years have not been able to obliterate. I re-

member in that letter she told me that she was in the habit of reading my story aloud to the audience of her nephews and nieces,—a simple announcement that imparted such a glow of proud delight to me that I can yet recall the courage with which I resumed the writing of my tale, and the hope it suggested of my being able one day to win a place of honour amongst those who, like herself, had selected Irish traits as the characteristics to adorn fiction.

For Con Heffernan I had an original. For Bagenal Daly, too, I was not without a model. His sister is purely imaginary, but that she is not unreal I am bold enough to hope, since several have assured me that they know where I found my type. In my brief sketch of Lord Castlereagh I was not, I need scarcely say, much aided by the journals and pamphlets of the time, where his character and conduct were ruthlessly and most falsely assailed. It was my fortune to have possessed the close intimacy of one who had acted as his private secretary, and whose abilities have since raised him to a high station and great employment; and from him I came to know the real nature of one of the ablest statesmen of his age, as he was one of the most attractive companions and most accomplished gentlemen. I have no vain pretence to believe that by my weak and unfinished sketch I have in any way vindicated the Minister who carried the Union, but I have at least tried to represent him as he was in the society of his intimates: his gay and cheerful temperament, his

frank nature, and—what least the world is disposed to concede to him—his sincere belief in the honesty of men whose convictions were adverse to him, and who could not be won over to his opinions.

I have not endeavoured to conceal the gross corruption of an era which remains to us a national shame, but I would wish to lay stress on the fact that not a few resisted offers and temptations which, to men struggling with humble fortune and linked for life with the fate of the weaker country, must redound to their high credit. All the nobler their conduct, as around them on every side were the great names of the land trafficking for title and place, and shamelessly demanding office for their friends and relatives as the price of their own adhesion.

For that degree of intimacy which I have represented as existing between Bagenal Daly and Freney the Robber, I have been once or twice reprehended for conveying a false and unreal view of the relations of the time; but the knowledge I myself had of Freney, of his habits and his exploits, was given to me by a well-known and highly connected Irish gentleman who represented a county in the Irish parliament, and who was a man of unblemished honour, and conspicuous alike in station and ability. And there is still—and once the trait existed more markedly in Ireland — a wonderful sympathy between all classes and conditions of people, so that the old stories and traditions that amuse the crouching listener round the hearth of the cottage find their way into luxurious drawing-

rooms; and by their means a brotherhood of sentiment was maintained between the highest class in the land and the humblest peasant who laboured for his daily bread.

I tried to display the effect of this strange teaching on the mind of a cultivated gentleman when I was describing The Knight of Gwynne. I endeavoured to show the "Irishry" of his nature was no other than the play of those qualities by which he appreciated his countrymen and was appreciated by them. So powerful is this sympathy and so strong the sense of national humour through all classes of the people, that each is able to entertain a topic from the same point of view as his neighbour, and the subtle *equivoque* in the polished witticism which amuses the gentleman is never lost on the untutored ear of the peasant. Is there any other land of which one can say so much?

If this great feature of attractiveness pertains to the country and adds to its adaptiveness as the subject of fiction, I cannot but feel that to un-Irish ears it is necessary to make an explanation which will serve to show that what would elsewhere imply a certain blending of station and condition is here but a proof of that widespread understanding by which, however divided by race, tradition, and religion, Irishmen are always able to appeal to certain sympathies and dispositions held in common, and to feel the tie of a common country.

At the period in which I placed my story the rivalry between the two nations was, with all its violence, by no means ungenerous. No contemptu-

ous estimate of Irishmen formed the theme of English journalism; and between the educated men of both countries there was scarcely a jealousy. The character which political strife subsequently assumed changed much of this spirit, and dyed nationalities with an amount of virulence which, with all its faults and all its shortcomings, we do not find in the times of "The Knight of Gwynne."

'Roland Cashel.'

I first thought of this story — I should say I planned it, if the expression were not misleading— when living at the Lake of Como. There, in a lovely little villa—the Cima—on the border of the lake, with that glorious blending of Alpine scenery and garden-like luxuriance around me, and little or none of interruption and intercourse, I had abundant time to make acquaintance with my characters, and follow them into innumerable situations and through adventures far more extraordinary and exciting than I dared afterwards to recount.

I do not know how it may be with other story-tellers, but I have to own for myself that the personages of a novel gain over me at times a degree of interest very little inferior to that inspired by living and real people, and that this is especially the case when I have found myself in some secluded spot and seeing little of the world. To such an ascendancy has this deception attained,

that more than once I have found myself trying to explain why this person should have done that, and by what impulse that other was led into something else. In fact, I have found that there are conditions of the mind in which purely imaginary creations assume the characters of actual people, and act positively as though they were independent of the will that invented them.

Of the strange manner in which imagination can thus assume the mastery, and for a while, at least, have command over the mind, I cannot give a stronger instance within my own experience than the mode in which 'Roland Cashel' was first conceived.

When I began I intended that the action should be carried on in the land where the story opened. The scene on every side of me had shed its influence; the air was weighty with the perfume of the lime and the orange. To days of dazzling brilliancy there succeeded nights of tropical splendour, with stars of almost preternatural magnitude streaking the calm lake with long lines of light. To people a scene like this with the sort of characters that might befit it, was rather a matter of necessity with me than of choice, and it was then that Maritaña revealed herself to me with a charm of loveliness I have never been able to repicture. It was there I bethought me of those passionate natures in which climate, and soil, and vegetation reproduce themselves, glowing, ardent, and voluptuous as they are. It was there my fancy loved to stray among the changeful incidents of lives of wild adventure and wilder passion; and to imagine

strange discords that could be evoked between the traits of a land that recalled Paradise and the natures that were only angelic in the fall.

I cannot trust to my memory to remind me of the sort of tale I meant to write. I know there was to have been a perfect avalanche of adventure on land and on sea. I know that through a stormy period of daily peril and excitement the traits of the Northern temperament in Roland himself were to have asserted their superiority over his more impulsive comrades; I know he was to have that girl's love against a rivalry that set life in the issue; and I have a vague impression of how such a character might come by action and experience to develop such traits as make men the rulers of their fellows.

Several of the situations occur to me, but not a single clue to the story. There are even now scenes before me of prairie life and lonely rides in passes of the Pampas,—of homes where the civilised man had never seen a brother nor heard a native tongue. It is in vain I endeavour to recall anything like a connected narrative. All that I can well remember is the great hold the characters had taken in my mind — how they peopled the landscape around me, and followed me wherever I went. This was in autumn. As winter drew nigh we moved into an Italian city,[1] much frequented by foreigners, and especially the resort of our countrymen. The new life of this place and the interest they excited, so totally unlike all that

[1] Florence.

I had left at my little villa, effected a complete revolution in my thoughts, utterly routing the belief I had indulged in as to the characters of my story, and the incidents in which they displayed themselves. Up to this all my efforts had been, as it were, to refresh my mind as to a variety of events and people I had once known, and to try if I could not recall certain situations which had interested me. Now the spell was broken, all the charm of illusion gone, and I woke to the dreary consciousness of my creatures being mere shadows, and their actions as unreal as themselves. There is a sort of intellectual bankruptcy in such awakenings; and I know of few things so discouraging as this sudden revulsion from dreamland to the cold *terra firma* of unadorned fact.

There was little in the city we now lived in to harmonise with "romance." It was, in fact, all that realism could accomplish with the aids of every taste and passion of modern society. That this life of present-day dissipation should be enacted in scenes where every palace, and every street, every monument, and, indeed, every name, recalled a glorious past, may not impossibly have heightened the enjoyment of the drama, but most unquestionably it vulgarised the actors. Instead of the Orinoco and its lands of feathery palms, I had before me the Arno and its gay crowds of loungers, the endless tide of equipages, and the strong pulse-beat of an existence that even, in the highways of life, denotes pleasure and emotion.

What I had of a plan was lost to me from that hour. I was again in the whirlpool of active existence, and the world around me was deep—triple deep—in all cases of loving and hating, and plotting and gambling, of intriguing, countermining, and betraying, as very polite people would know how to do, — occupations to watch which inspire an intensity of interest unknown in any other condition of existence.

Out of these impressions thus enforced came all the characters of my story. Not one was a portrait, though in each and all were traits taken from life. If I suffered myself on one single occasion to amass too many of the characteristics of an individual into a sketch, it was in the picture of the Dean of Drumcondra; but there I was drawing from recollection, and not able to correct, as I should otherwise have done, what might seem too close adherence to a model. I have been told that in the character of Linton I have exaggerated wickedness beyond all belief. I am sorry to reply that I made but a faint copy of him who suggested that personage, and who lives and walks the stage of life as I write. One or two persons—not more—who know him whose traits furnished the picture, are well aware that I have neither overdrawn my sketch nor exaggerated my drawing.

The Kennyfeck young ladies, I am anxious to say, are not from life; nor is Lady Kilgoff, though I have heard surmises to the contrary.

These are all the explanations and excuses that occur to me I have to make of this story. Its graver faults are not within the pale of apology, and for these I only ask indulgence—the same indulgence that has never been denied me.

'Con Cregan.'

An eminent apothecary of my acquaintance once told me that to each increase of his family he added ten per cent to the price of his drugs; and as his quiver was full of daughters, a "black-draught," when I knew him, was a more costly cordial than curaçoa.

To apply this: I may mention that I had a daughter born to me about the time that 'Con Cregan' dates from, and not having at my command the same resources as my friend the chemist, I adopted the alternative of writing another story, to be published contemporaneously with 'The Daltons'; and in order not to incur the reproach—so natural in criticism—of over-writing myself, I took care that the work should come out without a name.

I am not sure that I made any attempt to disguise my style. I was conscious of scores of blemishes—I decline to call them mannerisms—that would betray me; but I believe I trusted most of all to the fact that I was making my monthly appearance in another story and with

another publisher,[1] and I hoped my small duplicity would escape undetected.

I was aware that there was a certain amount of peril in running an opposition coach on the line I had, in some degree, made my own; not to say that it might be questionable policy to glut the public with a kind of writing more remarkable for peculiarity than for perfection.

I remember that excellent Irishman, Bianconi[2]—not the less Irish that he was born at Lucca (which was simply a "bull")—once telling me that in order to popularise a road on which few people were then travelling, and on which his daily two-horse car was accustomed to go its journey with two (or at most three) passengers, the idea occurred to him of starting an opposition conveyance—of course in perfect secrecy and with every outward show of its being a genuine rival. He effected his object with such success that his own agents were completely "taken in," and never wearied of reporting, for his gratification, all the shortcomings and disasters of the rival company.

At length, when the struggle between the competitors was crucial, one of Bianconi's drivers rushed frantically into his office one day crying out, "Give me a crown piece to drink your honour's health for what I have done to-day."

"What was it, Larry?"

"I killed the yallow mare of the opposition car.

[1] 'Con Cregan' was published by W. S. Orr & Co., Paternoster Row. 'The Daltons' was published by Chapman & Hall.—E. D.

[2] Charles Bianconi, an Italian who revolutionised road traffic in Ireland.—E. D.

I passed her on the long hill when she was blown, and I bruk her heart before she reached the top."

"After this I gave up the opposition," said my friend. "Mocking was catching, as the old proverb says, and I thought that one might carry a joke a little too far."

I had this experience before me, and I will not say that it did not impress me. I imagined, however, that I did not care on which horse I stood to win: in other words, I persuaded myself it was a matter of perfect indifference to me which book took best with the public — whether the reader thought better of 'The Daltons' or 'Con Cregan.'

That I totally misunderstood myself, or misconceived the case before me, I am now quite ready to own. For one notice of 'The Daltons' by the press there were at least three or four of 'Con Cregan'; and while the former was dismissed with a few polite and measured phrases, the latter was largely praised and freely quoted. Nor was this all. The critics discovered in 'Con Cregan' a freshness and a vigour which were so sadly deficient in 'The Daltons.' It was, they averred, the work of a less practised writer, but of one whose humour was more subtle, and whose portraits, roughly sketched as they were, indicated a far higher intellect than that of the well-known author of 'Harry Lorrequer.'

The unknown—for there was no attempt made to guess who the writer was—was pronounced not to be an imitator of Mr Lever,—though there were certain small points of resemblance. He was clearly

original in his conception of character, in his conduct of his story, and in his dialogue; and there was displayed a knowledge of life in certain scenes and under certain conditions to which Mr Lever could lay no claim. One critic, who had discovered some features of resemblance between the two writers, uttered a friendly caution to Mr Lever to look to his laurels, for there was a rival in the field possessing many of the characteristics by which he first won public favour, but the unknown author possessed a racy drollery in description and a quaintness in his humour all his own.

It was the amusement of one of my children at the time to collect these sage comments and to torment me with them; and I remember a droll little note-book in which they were pasted, and from which quotations were read from time to time with no small display of merriment.

It may sound very absurd to confess it, but I was excessively amazed at the superior success of the unacknowledged book, and I felt the rivalry as painfully as though I had never written a line of 'Con Cregan.' Was it that I thought well of one story and meanly of the other, and in consequence was angry with my critics? I suspect not. I imagine that I was hurt at discovering how little hold I had, in my acknowledged name, on a public with whom I fancied I was on such good terms, and that it pained me to see with what ease a new and a nameless man could push me from the place I had believed to be my own.

'The Daltons' I always wrote, after my habit,

in the morning. I never turned to 'Con Cregan' until nigh midnight; and I can still remember the widely different feelings with which I addressed myself to the task I liked—to a story which, in the absurd fashion I have mentioned, was associated with wounded self-love.

It is scarcely necessary for me to say that there was no plan whatever in 'Con Cregan.' My notion was that the hero, once created, would not fail to find adventures. The vicissitudes of daily poverty would beget shifts and contrivances: with his successes would come ambition and daring. Meanwhile a growing knowledge of life would develop his character, and I should soon see whether he would win the silver spoon or spoil the horn. I ask pardon in the most humble manner for presuming for a moment to associate my hero with the great original of Le Sage.[1] But I used the word Irish adjectively and with the same amount of qualification that one employs to a diamond, and indeed, as I have read it in a London paper, to a lord.

An American officer, of whom I saw much at the time, was my guide to the interior of Mexico: he had been in the Santa Fé expedition, was a man of most adventurous disposition, with a love for stirring incident and peril which even broken health and a failing constitution could not subdue. It was often very difficult for me to tear myself away from his Texan and Mexican experiences,—his wild scenes of prairie life, or his sojourn

[1] This refers to the sub-title of 'The Confessions of Con Cregan'—The Irish Gil Blas.'—E. D.

amongst Indian tribes—and to keep to the more commonplace events of my own story. Nor could all my entreaties confine him to descriptions of those places and scenes which I needed for my own characters.

The saunter after tea-time with this companion, generally along that little river that tumbles through the valley of the Bagni di Lucca, was the usual preparation for my night's work; and I came to it as intensely possessed by Mexico—dress, manner, and landscape—as though I had been drawing on the recollections of a former journey.

So completely separated in my mind by the different parts of the day were the two tales, that no character of 'The Daltons' ever crossed my mind after nightfall, nor was there a trace of 'Con Cregan' in my head at breakfast next morning.

None of the characters of 'Con Cregan' has been taken from life. The one bit of reality is in the sketch of Anticosti, where I myself suffered once a very small shipwreck, of which I retain a very vivid recollection to this hour.

I have already owned that I bore a grudge to the story; nor have I outlived the memory of the chagrin it cost me, though it is many a year since I acknowledged that 'Con Cregan' was written by the author of 'Harry Lorrequer.'

'The Martins of Cro-Martin.'

When I had made my arrangements with my publishers for this new story, I was not sorry, for many reasons, to place the scene of it in Ireland. One of my late critics, in noticing 'Roland Cashel' and 'The Daltons,' mildly rebuked me for having fallen into doubtful company, and half-censured—in Bohemian—several of the characters in these novels. I was not then, still less am I now, disposed to argue the point with my censor, and show that there is a very wide difference between the people who move in the polite world, with a very questionable morality, and those patented adventurers whose daily existence is the product of daily address. The more one sees of life, the more he is struck by the fact that the mass of mankind is rarely very good or very bad, that the business of life is carried on with mixed motives, the best people being those who are least selfish, and the worst being little other than those who seek their own objects with slight regard for the consequences to others, and even less scruple as to the means.

Any uniformity in good or evil would be the death-blow to that genteel comedy which goes on around us, and whose highest interest very often centres in the surprises we give ourselves by unexpected lines of action and unlooked-for impulses. As this strange drama unfolded itself before me, it had become a passion with me to watch the actors, and speculate on what they

might do. For this Florence offered an admirable stage. It was eminently cosmopolitan, and, in consequence, less under the influence of any distinct code of public opinion than any section of the several nationalities I might have found at home.

There was a universal toleration abroad: and the Spaniard conceded to the German, and the Russian to the Englishman, much on the score of nationality, and did not question too closely a morality which, after all, might have been little more than a conventional habit. Exactly in the same way, however, that one hurries away from the life of a city and its dissipations to breathe the fresh air and taste the delicious quiet of the country, did I turn from the scenes of splendour, from the crush of wealth, and the conflict of emotion, to that Green Island where so many of my sympathies were intertwined, and where the great problem of human happiness was on its trial on issues that differed wonderfully little from those that were being tried in gilded salons, and by people whose names were blazoned in history.

Ireland, at the time I speak of, was beginning to feel that sense of distrust and jealousy between the owner and the tiller of the soil which, later on, was to develop itself into open feud. The old ties that have bound the humble to the rich man, and which were hallowed by reciprocal acts of goodwill and benevolence, were being loosened. Benefits were canvassed with suspicion, ungracious or unholy acts were treasured up as cruel wrongs.

The political agitator had so far gained the ear of the people that he could persuade them that there was not a hardship or a grievance of their lot that could not be laid at the door of the landlord. He was taught to regard the old relation of love and affection to the owner of the soil as the remnants of a barbarism that had had its day; and he was led to believe that whether the tyranny that crushed him was the Established Church or the landlord, there was a great Liberal party ready to aid him in resisting either or both when he could summon courage for the effort. By what prompting the poor man was brought to imagine that a reign of terror would suffice to establish him in an undisputed possession of the soil, and that the best lease was a loaded musket, it is neither my wish nor my duty to here narrate; I only desire to call my reader's attention to the time itself as a transition period when the peasant had begun to unclasp some of the ties that had bound him to his landlord, and had not yet conceived the idea of that formidable conspiracy which issues its death-warrants, and never is at a loss for agents to enforce them. There were at the time some who, seeing the precarious condition of the period, had their grave forebodings of what was to come when further estrangement between the two classes was accomplished, and when the poor man should come to see in the rich only an oppressor and a tyrant. There was not at that time the armed resistance to rents, nor the threatening letter system to which we were afterwards

to become accustomed, still less was there the thought that the Legislature would interfere to legalise the demands by which the tenant was able to coerce his landlord; and for a brief interval there did seem a possibility of reuniting once again, by the ties of benefit and gratitude, the two classes whose welfare depends on concord and harmony.

I have not the shadow of a pretext to be thought didactic, but I did believe that if I recalled in fiction some of the traits which once had bound up the relations of rich and poor, and given to our social system many of the characteristics of a family, I should be reviving pleasant memories if not doing something more.

To this end I sketched the character of Mary Martin. By making the opening of my story date from the time of the Relief Bill, I intended to picture the state of the country at one of the most memorable eras in its history, and when an act of the Legislature assumed to redress inequalities, compose differences, and allay jealousies of centuries' growth, and make two widely different races one contented people.

I had not, I own, any implicit faith in Acts of Parliament, and I had a fervent belief in what kindness—when combined with knowledge of Ireland—could do with Irishmen. I have never heard of a people with whom sympathy could do so much, nor the want of it be so fatal. I have never heard of any other people to whom the actual amount of benefit was of less moment than the mode in which it was bestowed. I have never

read of a race who, in great poverty and many privations, attach a higher value to the consideration that is bestowed on them than to the actual material boons, and feel such a seemingly disproportioned gratitude for kind words and generous actions.

What might not be anticipated from a revulsion of sentiment in a people like this? To what violence might not this passion for vengeance be carried if the notion possessed them that they, whom she called her betters, only traded on the weakness of their poverty and the imbecility of their good faith? It was in a fruitful soil of this kind that the agitator now sowed the seeds of distrust and disorder, and with what fatal rapidity the poison reproduced itself and spread, the history of late years is the testimony. . . .

I have said already, and I repeat it here, that this character of Mary Martin is purely fictitious; and there is the more need I should say it since there was once a young lady of this very name, many traits of whose affection for the people and their wellbeing might be supposed to be my original. To my great regret I have never had the happiness to meet her; however, I have heard much of her devotion and goodness.

I am not sure that some of my subordinate characters were not drawn from life. Mrs Nelligan, I remember, had her type in a little Galway town I once stopped at; and Dan Nelligan had much in common with one who has since held a distinguished place on the Bench.

Of the terrible epidemic which devastated Ireland, there was much for which I drew on my own experience. Of its fearful ravages in the West, in the wilds of Clare, and that lonely promontory which stretches at the mouth of the Shannon into the Atlantic, I had been the daily witness; and even to recall some of the incidents passingly was an effort of great pain.

Of one of the features of the people at this disastrous time I could not say enough; nor could any words of mine do justice to the splendid heroism with which they bore up, and the noble generosity they showed to each other in misfortune. It is but too often remarked how selfish men are made by misery, and how fatal is a common affliction to that charity that cares for others. There was none of this here: I never in any condition or class recognised more traits of thoughtful kindness and self-denial than I did amongst these poor, famished, and forgotten people. I never witnessed, in the same perfection, how a widespread affliction could call up a humanity great as itself, and make very commonplace natures something actually heroic and glorious.

Nothing short of the fatal tendency I have to digression, and the watchful care I am bound to bestow against this fault, prevented me from narrating several incidents with which my own experience had made me acquainted. Foreign as these were to the burden of my tale, it was only by an effort I overcame the temptation to recall them.

If a nation is to be judged by her bearing under calamity, Ireland—and she has had some experiences—comes well through the ordeal. That we may yet see how she will sustain her part in happier circumstances is my hope and prayer, and that the time be not too far off!

XXIV.

THE END.

'Lord Kilgobbin' was published in three volumes early in 1872. "In finishing it," its author said, "I have also finished my own career as a story-writer. Time was when the end of a journey only heralded the preparation for another. Now the next must be a longer road. . . . I do so long for rest—rest." The novel was dedicated "to the memory of one whose companionship made the happiness of a long life. . . . The task that was once my joy and pride I have lived to find associated with my sorrow. It is not then without a cause I say—I hope this may be my last."

In May Mr and Mrs Blackwood, accompanied by Miss Blackwood (afterwards Mrs Porter), set out from Edinburgh. They visited Vienna, and here a rumour reached them that Charles Lever was dangerously ill. A few days later, while the Blackwoods were visiting Robert Lytton ("Owen Meredith") at his country seat near Vienna, they heard that Lever was better. Mrs Porter (in 'The House of Blackwood') gives her impressions of the visit to Lever's home, and her memories of

the novelist's last days, vividly and with genuine feeling :—

"We set off to Trieste," writes Mrs Porter, "to see him, but not to stay in his house. Early the morning after our arrival Miss Lever called with the welcome news that Mr Lever was much better, and she took my father back with her to see him. When he returned to us he said it was arranged we should all dine with the Levers, and shortly before four we set off to drive to their villa, which was at the top of a hill and near some public gardens—so near that we could hear the German waltzes the band played as we sat out in the Levers' own garden, which was remarkably pretty, and full of shady trees. When we arrived Lever was sitting in a bright cheerful room with a large window, and a balcony opening off it covered with roses and creepers. He looked better and stronger than we had expected to see him, and the sight of his friend seemed to bring back a flicker of the old spirit, and he talked and laughed gaily during the dinner, which was at four o'clock. Lever's appearance did not give the impression of ill-health any more than it suggested the hard-working man of letters or denizen of the Consulate, but rather one would have imagined him to be a big, jolly, country gentleman, with his stalwart frame and ruddy face—his air of hearty hospitality and welcome still further strengthening the impression. The rest of the party were, besides his two daughters, Mr Monson and Mr Smart.

"After dinner we adjourned to the garden for

coffee and cigarettes, and Mr Lever sat up till very late. The second evening the same pleasant party, with the addition of the clergyman, Mr Callaghan; the same amount of laughing and talking, perhaps rather more. Many were the jokes about their neighbours, the society being mainly composed of wealthy Jewish merchants and their families; but the impression was that the jokes were all kindly, the wit without sting, and that the Jews had been made the best of in that cheery happy-go-lucky household. Indeed he mentioned that on some festive occasion Lord Dalling, in an amiable whisper, had remarked at last, 'Lever, I like your Jews,' and this, of course, made everybody feel quite happy. My father had a great wish to see Miramar, the home of the ill-fated Archduke Maximilian, and Lever was as anxious to show it to him; but though we put it off till the last day of our visit, he was unequal to the exertion of driving so far, so Miss Lever drove with us to the house.

. . . . . .

"And now comes the sad part, our last evening at the Villa Gasteiger. My father had dreaded this parting: he knew his friend was not really better—that the heart complaint he suffered from might prove fatal at any time; but he put the thought away from him when they were meeting every day. It was only now, as we approached his house for the last time, that we felt weighed down by something impending. Mr Lever was in the garden when we arrived, but soon dinner

was announced, and we went into the house, the same party as the first evening. The laughter and chaff at dinner had been as usual, and Mr Lever had been most delightful and amusing — the life and soul of the party. Afterwards we sat out in the garden under the trees, the band over the way playing as usual. Mr Lever said he was very proud of it. He asked for tea to be brought out there, and when told it was coming said, half to himself, 'So is Christmas,' with a smile to us. They were all smoking, and he sat in the middle of the group in an arm-chair, wearing his big shady hat, my father and mother on each side of him. He would not have the lamp they usually had in the garden, so it was nearly dark when the other guests sauntered away, leaving him alone with the friends who were soon to bid him farewell. He spoke very despairingly of himself, as though he should not recover, and said that always about that time after dinner he had a 'false feeling of health,' which he knew could not last. A great sadness came over us as we sat on, not talking much, listening to the band, which was playing all the time, giving an unreality to the scene, as though we were taking part in a drama. Our carriage meanwhile had come up, and had gone round to the back of the house. We heard it, but did not know how to get up and say good-bye. At last my father rose, and there was the usual stir and looking for cloaks and wraps, which seemed to help off our departure, poor Lever joking and laughing as he helped to wrap us up, and escorted us to the carriage. We

shook hands with him, and said good-bye to the others there. As we drove away we looked back and saw him standing with his daughters watching us and waving farewell. We knew it was really good-bye, and our drive was a silent one.

"Our apprehensions about Lever's health were only too well founded, for on our reaching Venice at five o'clock the following afternoon we were met by a telegram saying he had died during the day [1st June]. My father immediately returned to Trieste by a steamer which was just starting, to be of what use he might to his friend's daughters. The journey by sea occupied twelve hours, and he wrote the next morning as follows: 'I got here about seven this morning, after a not unpleasant voyage, considering the company and the circumstances. After bath and breakfast I went to Smart's room and found him and Monson. They said at once how pleased the daughters would be. They had not liked to ask me to come in the telegram, but hoped and expected I would come. I went up and sat for more than an hour with the two mourners. Poor souls! it was most affecting to hear them pouring forth about all their father's goodness and kindness. Poor Lever had sat talking about us after we left until about his usual hour, twelve. He had the usual restless night until about five, when he fell asleep. He awoke at the usual time for his letters, and after reading them and chatting he lay down to rest. They looked in from time to time as they were in the habit of doing, and found him sleeping quietly,

until Miss Lever, going in towards three, found he had apparently passed away without struggle or pain. . . . It is most melancholy to think of our fine bright friend. Sitting in that drawing-room to-day looking out on the garden, I could hardly help bursting out crying. It seemed hardly realisable. However, his last evening was a bright one, and it was an end such as he had wished. He had a perfect horror of living on weakened in body and mind, a weariness to himself and others.'"

At six o'clock on the evening of June 3, 1872, all that was mortal of Charles Lever was laid in the British Cemetery at Trieste, alongside the remains of her "whose companionship made the happiness of a long life."

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